

HARDCORE ANXIETY

A GRAPHIC GUIDE TO PUNK ROCK AND MENTAL HEALTH



REID CHANCELLOR



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HEALTH



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Microcosm Publishing
Portland, ORE



Hardcore Anxiety

A Graphic Guide to Punk Rock and Mental Health

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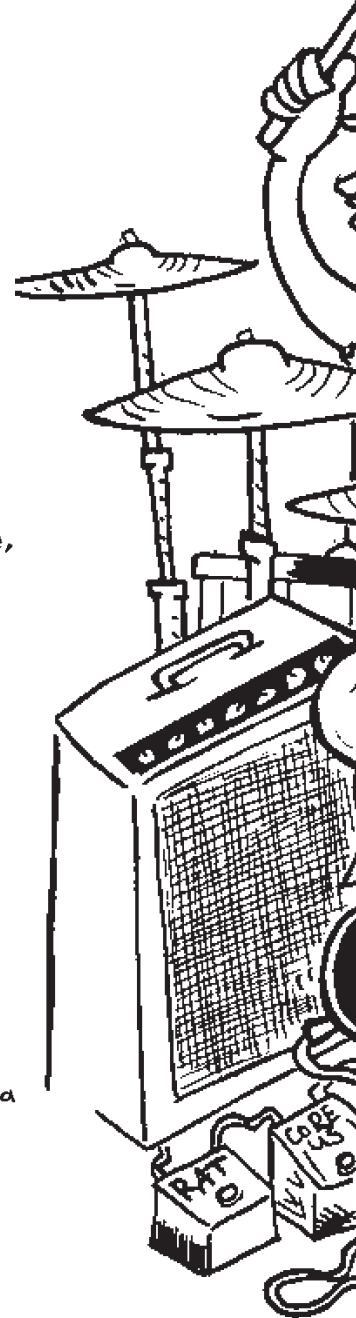
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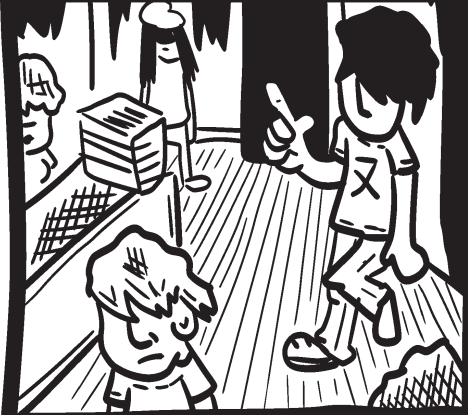
FOR KRISTAN:

Neither THIS Book NOR
I Would exist
Without your Support,
CARE, AND LOVE. THANK YOU.

The people at my first basement punk show all looked different, sounded different, and even felt different.



The basement was painted like a skeleton with rib cages and skulls around the stage.



Some of my friends joked that it looked like a rejected haunted house.



I liked to think that when the room fills up it becomes alive. We are the organs that make the room come to life.

It becomes something bigger than we could ever be.

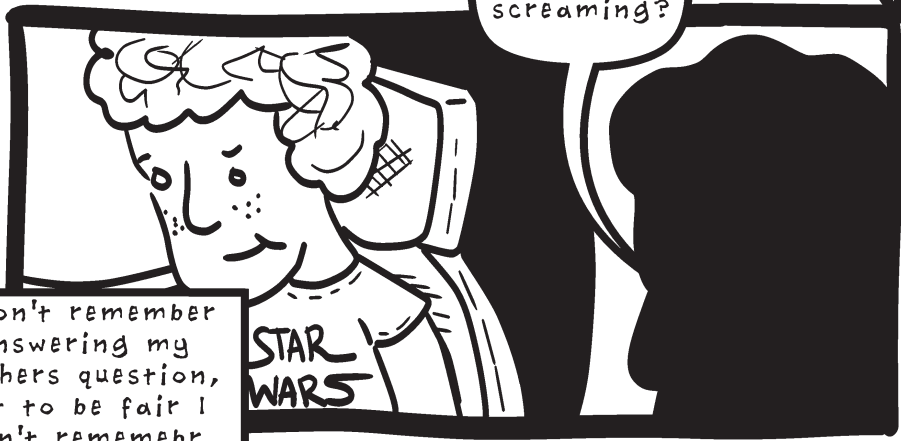




I am grateful for that room, because without that room I am empty. In the room I was surrounded by people I didn't know and that is where I found what I was looking for.



What's with the screaming?



I don't remember answering my fathers question, but to be fair I don't rememebr caring.

I had finally been in a place where I felt like I mattered. I was part of something bigger.

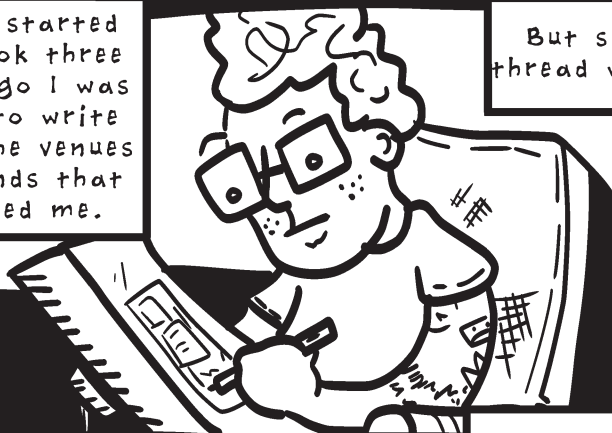
WIRED

I dreamed of playing in that venue, but before I could it burned down.



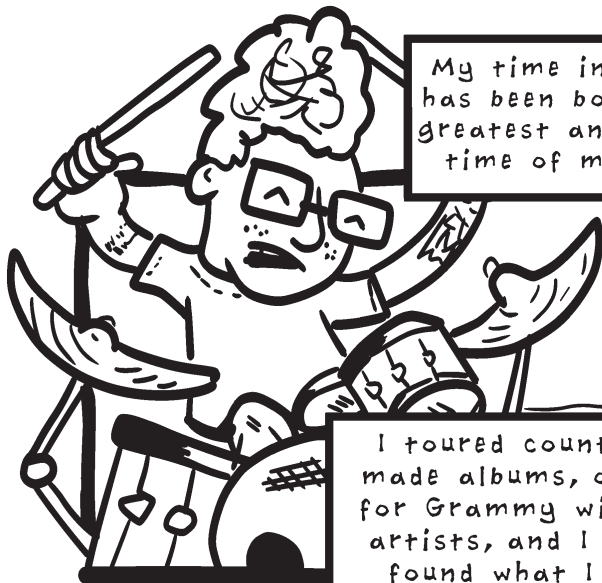
When I started this book three years ago I was going to write about the venues and bands that changed me.

But soon a new thread was revealed.



If you are holding this book then these bands and themes are as much a part of your life as they are mine.





My time in bands has been both the greatest and worst time of my life.

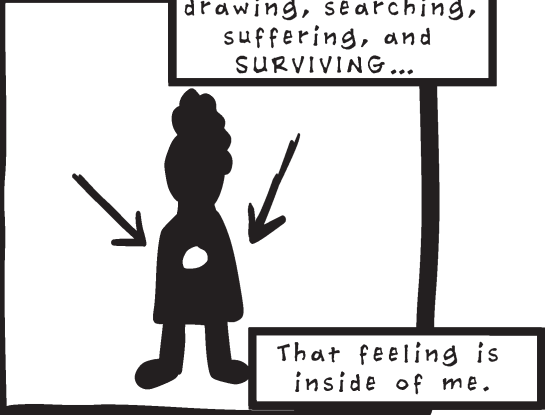
I toured countries, made albums, opened for Grammy winning artists, and I never found what I was looking for.



After years of working, playing, drawing, searching, suffering, and SURVIVING...



I am still chasing the feeling from the cheesy skeleton basememnt.



That feeling is inside of me.



And it's inside of you too.

I hope this book helps you understand that no matter what you arent alone and you can make it out alive.

The Ramones were founded in 1974 in Queens, New York. They were one of the first punk bands ever. Although they are just as well known for their on stage arguments.



The Ramones weren't afraid to talk about their mental state, their drug use, or any of their issues. Eventually they called it quits, playing their final show in 1996. Since then all original members have passed away.



Tommy Ramone was the original drummer for the band. He also produced the first 4 records, playing drums on 3 of them.



Dee Dee Ramone was a druggie, alcoholic, alleged sex worker and a surprisingly gifted songwriter. He wrote "53rd & 3rd" and co-wrote "Bonzo Goes to Blitzburg."

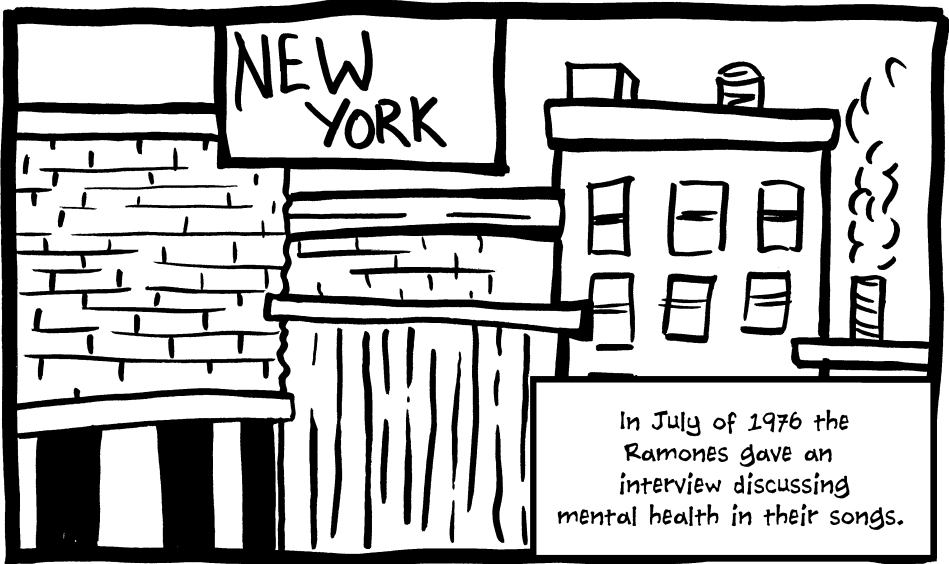
RAMONES

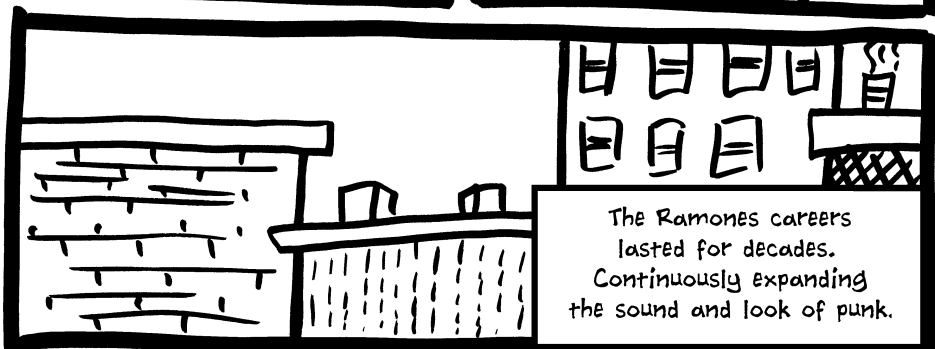


Johnny Ramone was a tyrant. He was from a military family and it showed in how he acted in the band.



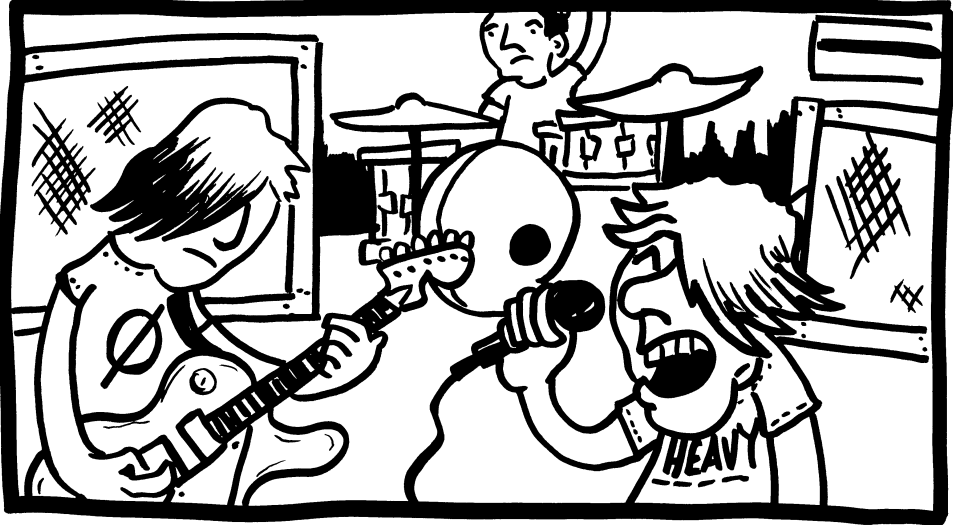
When Joey Ramone was a kid he was diagnosed with severe OCD. Causing him to feel like an outcast.





Boney Jones Music Venue
Evansville, IN 2010

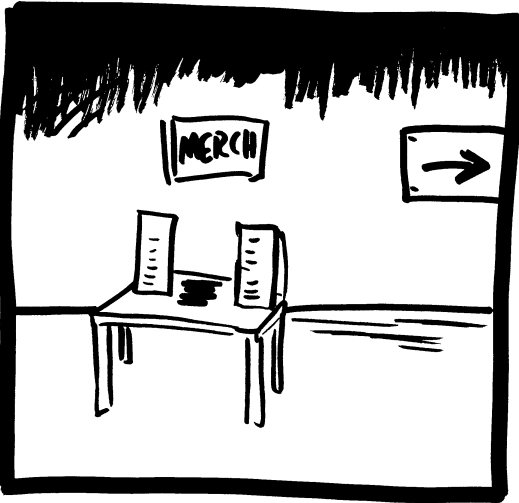
As far back as I can remember
I wanted to play in a band.
It became more than just a dream...

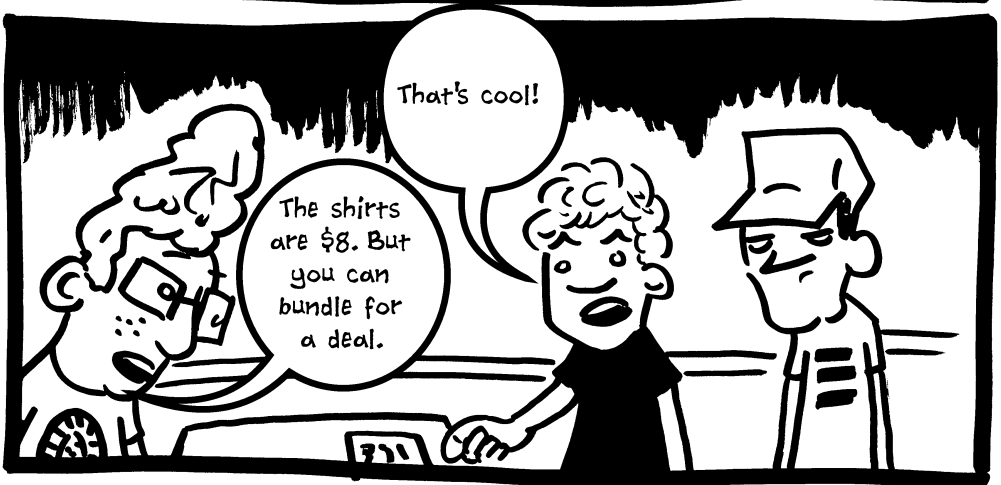
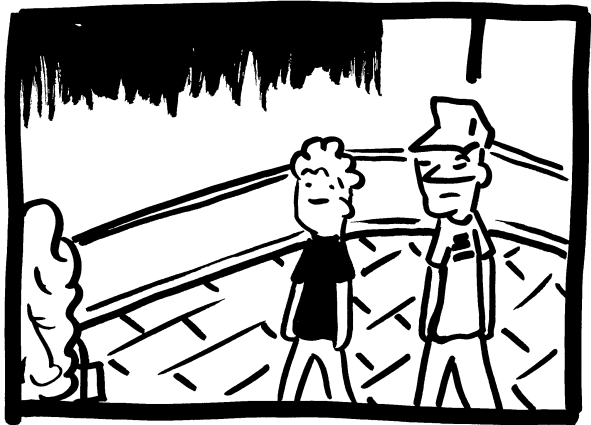
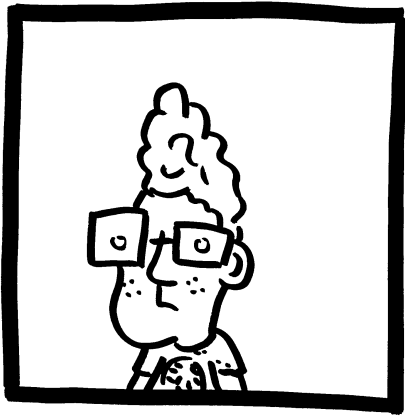


BONEY
JONES

It became my identity.

I went to as many shows as possible. I thought the lives of the local bands seemed so glamorous.







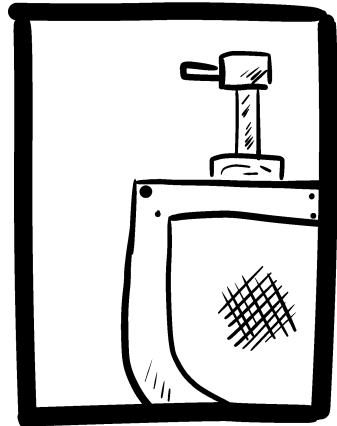
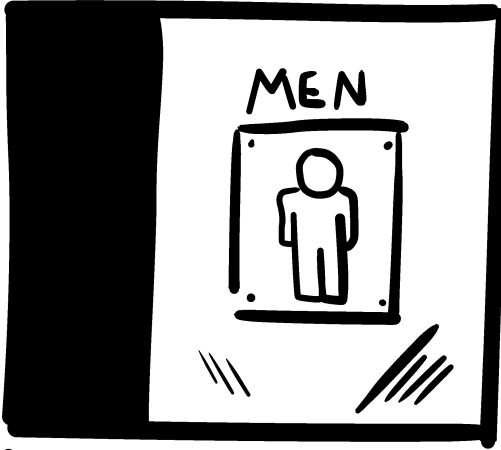
We'll come back after your set and pick one up.



I used to get my hopes up when people would say things like that to me. Now I know it is code for "It's cool that you made something but I want to make sure you guys don't suck before I spend the money my dad gave me for the show." I don't think my band sucks, but they never come back after we play,



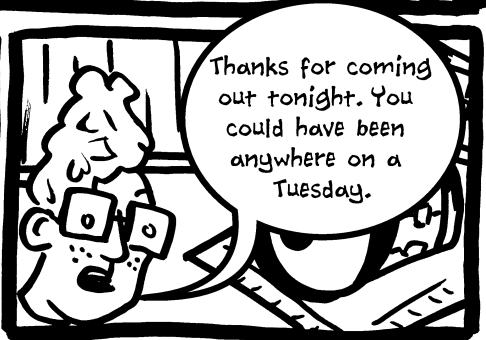
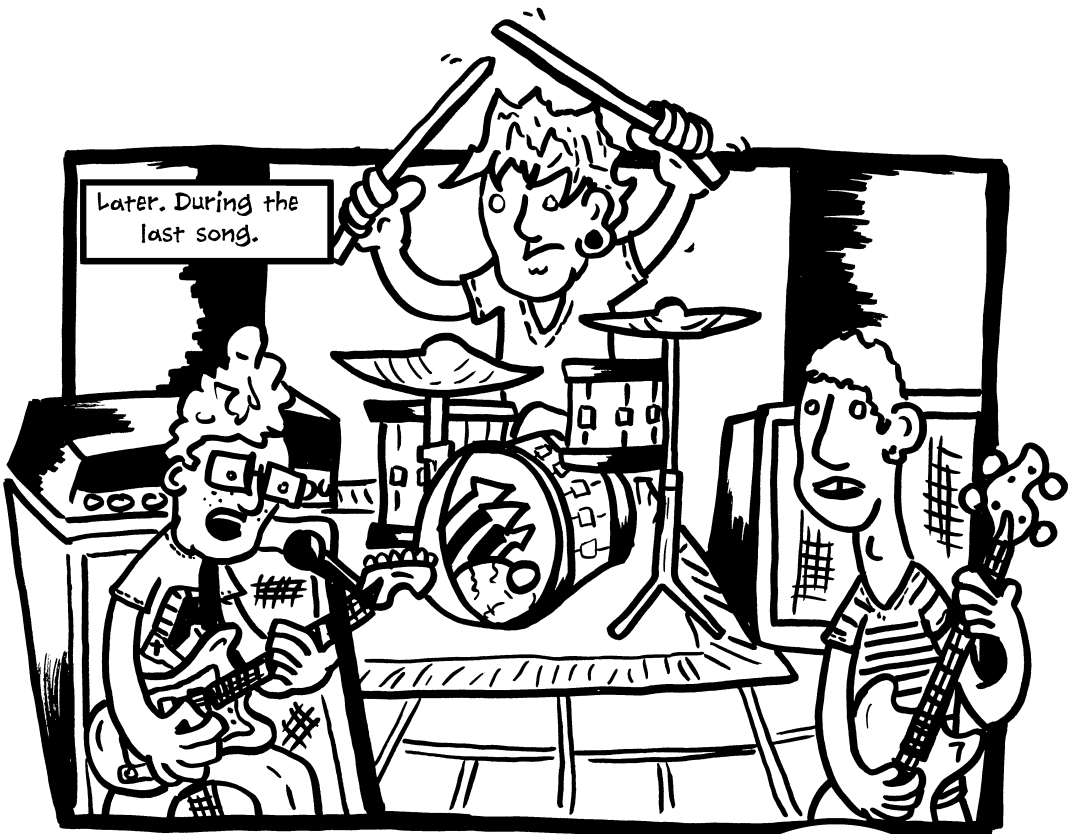
So I guess WE SUCK.

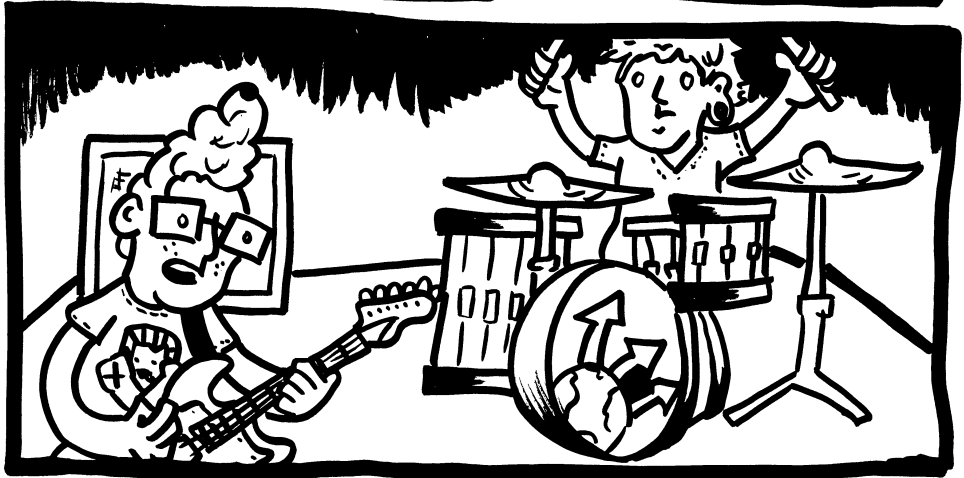
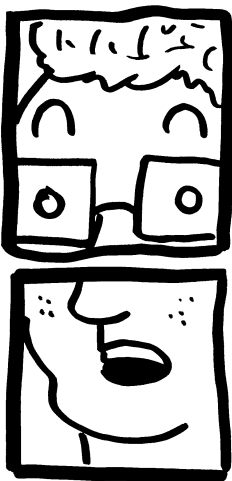




It may be a little weird that as a band we would meet in the bathroom. But there is something about the bathroom at venues that makes me feel calm. We did this before every show before this one. But this show? This show felt different.

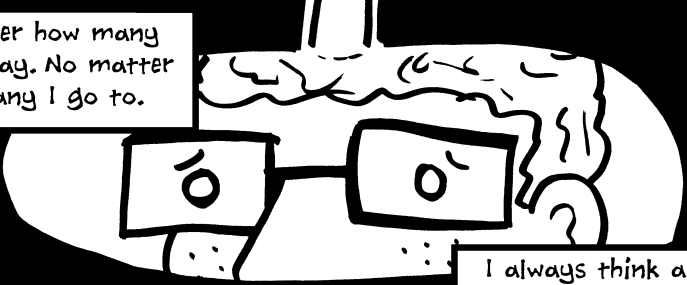








No matter how many shows I play. No matter how many I go to.



I always think about those words.



IF YOU'RE
IN A LOCAL
BAND YOU SHOULD
KILL YOURSELF!

KILL YOURSELF

Part 1



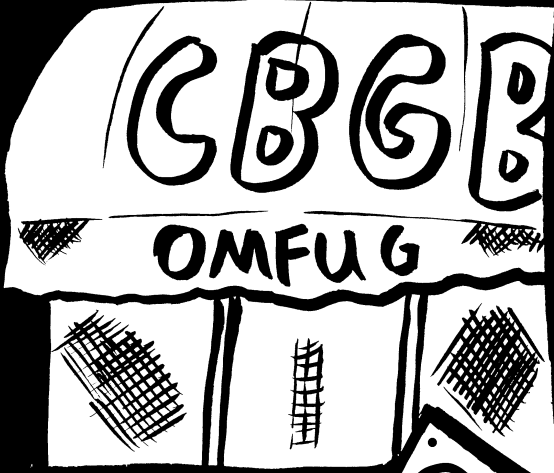
The origin of
punk rock is
treated with
the same
folklore as
Cinderella or
Red Riding
Hood.

NEVER MIND
THE BOLLOCKS

HERES THE

SEX PISTOLS

Some people
would say
that it
started in
England
with The
Sex Pistols.



Others would
say that it
started in
New York City.



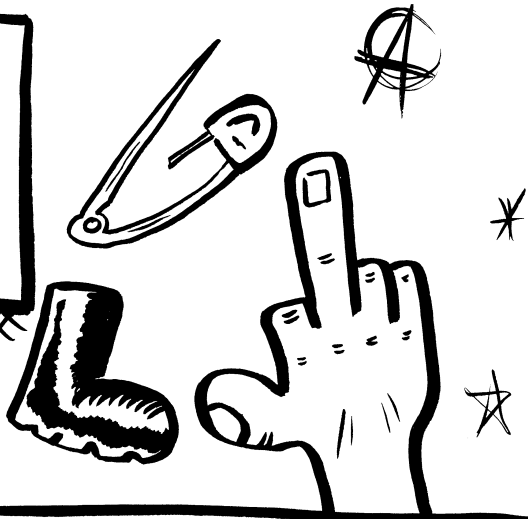
There are
even some
that say it
started

in their
second
cousin's
basement.

Now.
No matter
what you choose
to believe, each of these
are completely wrong...



After all the
middle fingers,
safety pins,
and boots, it
just comes down
to one thing. . .



YOUR
MIND.



It has nothing to
do with England or
New York, or any
of that shit.
It's inside us.



BLACK FLAG

Released "Nervous Breakdown" in 1979

Considered to be one of the first Hardcore Punk bands ever.



The song **NERVOUS BREAKDOWN** is a minute and a half explosion about a mental breakdown. From the beginning mental health played a strong role in punk and hardcore.

Black Flag worked hard from the start. Keith Morris was the first singer on songs like "Nervous Breakdown"



I'M ABOUT TO
HAVE A NERVOUS
BREAK
DOWN!

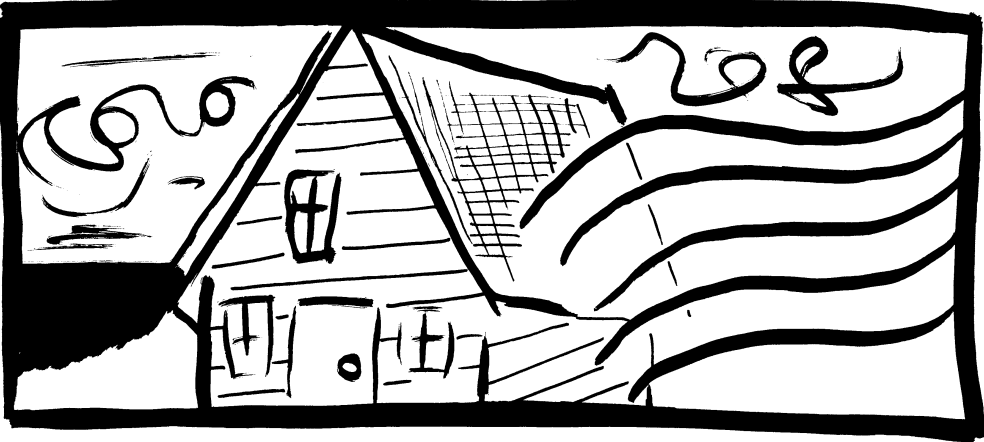
Alright
Keith, let's
practice the
songs again.



Greg Ginn

Chill Greg.
I'm gonna
have another
beer and then
we can start.

Shh





Greg Ginn

Black Flag didn't look like punk. They WERE punk.

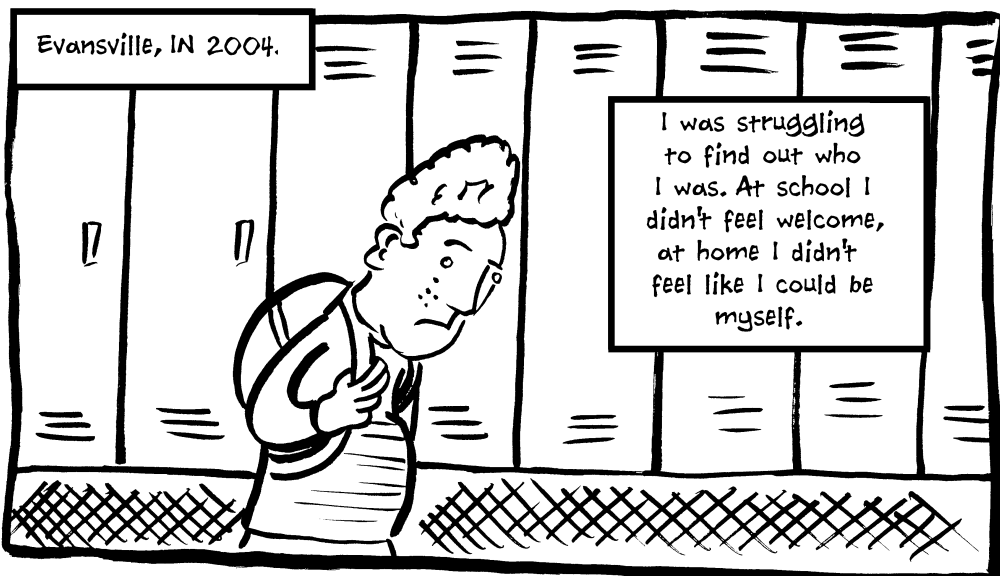
Chuck Dukowski

Black Flag is possibly the most well known hardcore punk band ever. They have also had a constant revolving door of members through the years. The first line-up only lasted a few years.

Robo

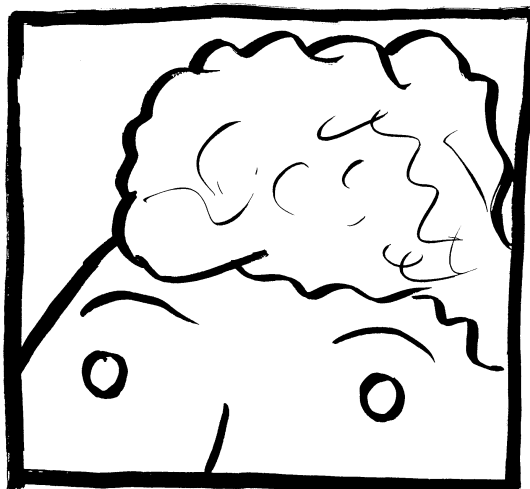
Keith Morris

Greg has been the only constant member. He took control of the band, and became very obsessive about practice. He wanted the band to be as well rehearsed as possible. Which is pretty different from what most people consider to be punk.

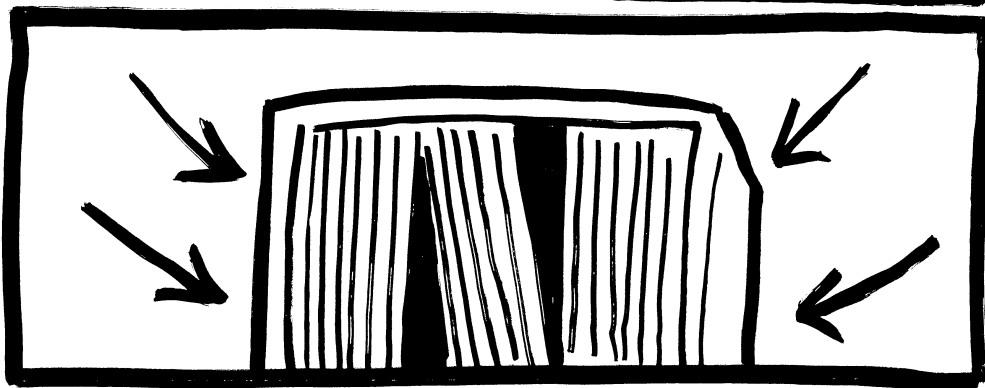


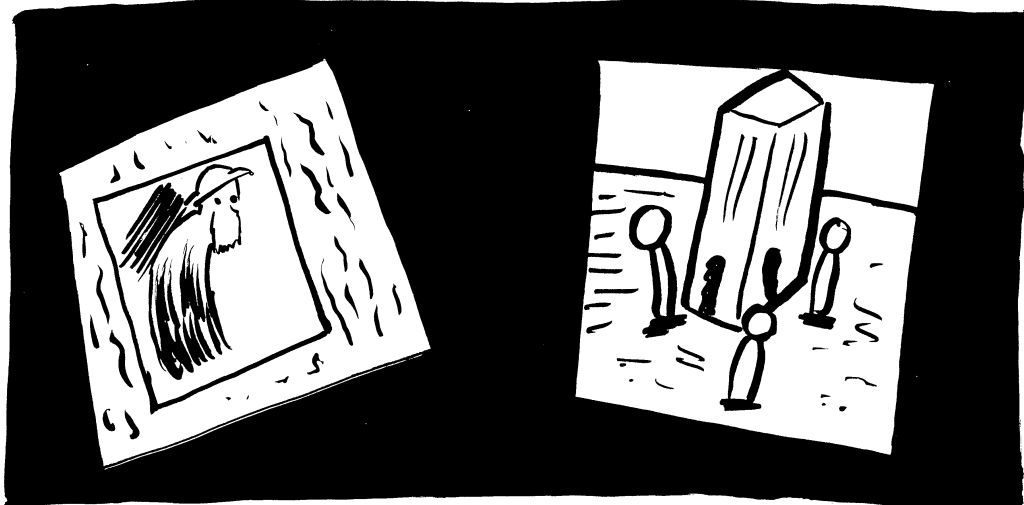
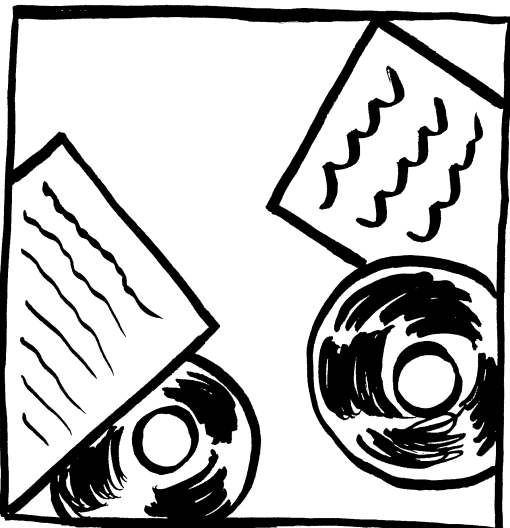
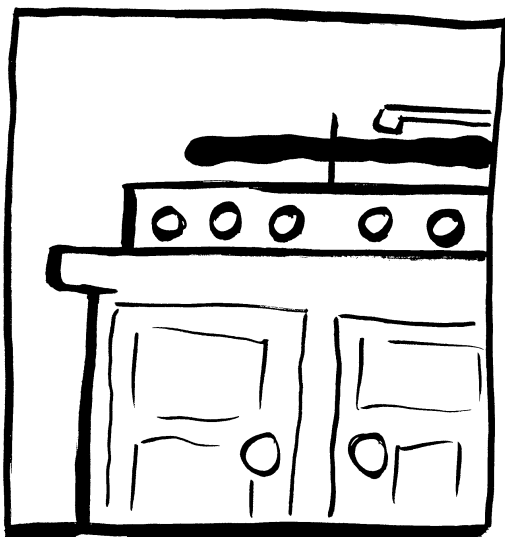
Evansville, IN 2004.

I was struggling to find out who I was. At school I didn't feel welcome, at home I didn't feel like I could be myself.

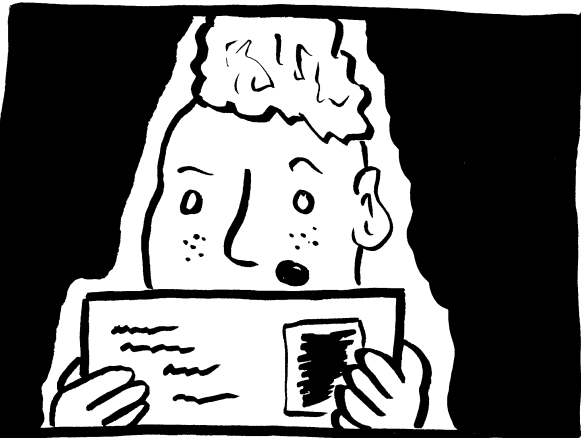


All that I ever wanted was to feel like I was a part of something bigger than myself. Once I found my father records it opened my mind to a whole new world of music and attitude.





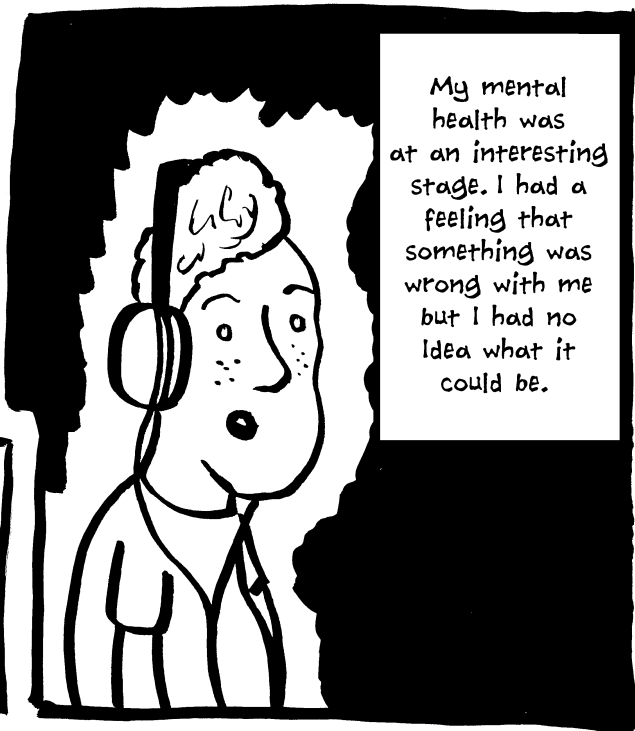
I listened to Zeppelin and The Who. But there was one album that caught my attention more than others...





London
Calling
By The
CLASH.

I was so interested in the album. I listened to it over and over again. What I loved about this record was that it didn't always sound like "punk" music.



My mental health was at an interesting stage. I had a feeling that something was wrong with me but I had no idea what it could be.

THE

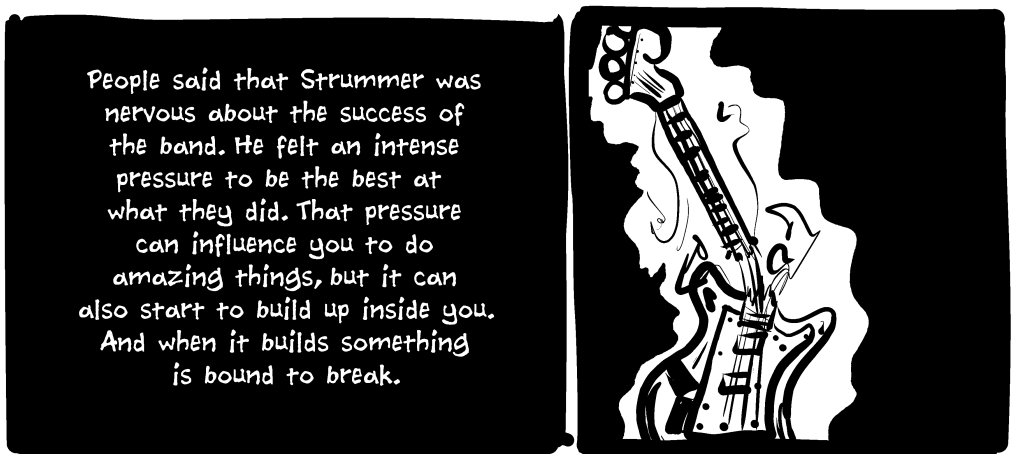
CLASH

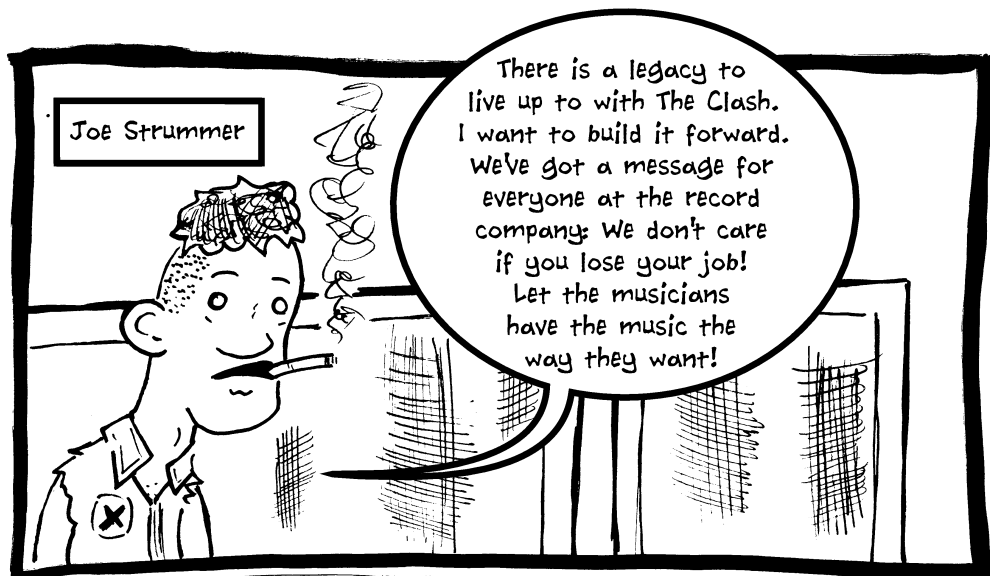
Formed in 1976, they were key to the creation of British Punk Rock.

They were more than just a punk band.



Journalists called them, "The only band that Matters."





Joe Strummer


There is a legacy to live up to with The Clash. I want to build it forward. We've got a message for everyone at the record company: We don't care if you lose your job! Let the musicians have the music the way they want!



Mick Jones

We started as punk, but developed into all sorts of things. We wanted to do a different album everytime. We kept the spirit of punk but also did our best while being popular.

The Clash are a gateway drug to punk music. The attitudes and the sheer motivation to make something that no body had ever heard before. When I found The Clash I felt like I had finally found something REAL. The Clash's mental health was fairly focused, which is odd for a punk band. But I find it incredibly important to include them because of the impact they had on punk rock culture and mental health. They showed us that there is always something to sing about. I can always look at The Clash and think "Man, there is a band the fucking did it." Joe Strummer once said about why he wrote songs, "a song is something you write because you can't sleep unless you write it."



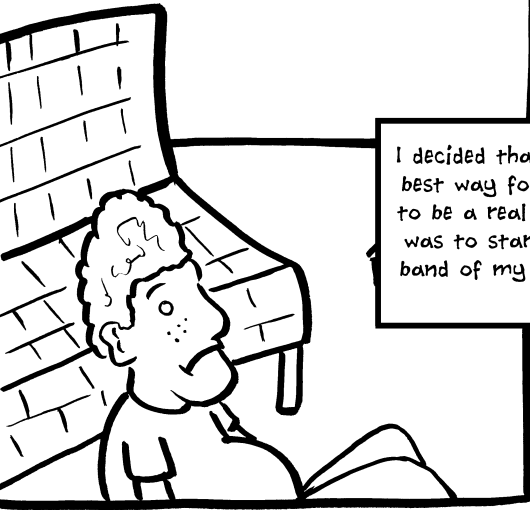
The Clash lead me
to the Ramones.
And even though I
knew punk was for
outcasts, I was scared
that somehow I
would be a found a
fraud.



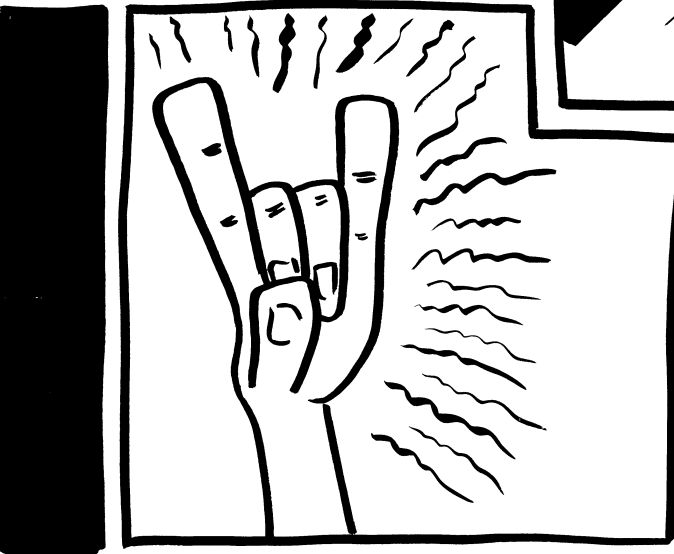
Was is this easy
to be punk? Do
you just put a
leather jacket and
then you are part
of the club?

Reid Ramone?





I decided that the best way for me to be a real punk was to start a band of my own.

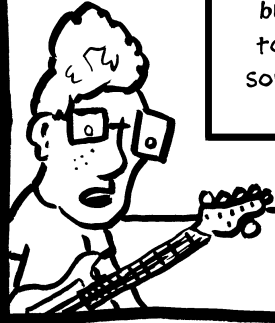


I knew what I wanted to do. But I had no idea how to do it. I didn't have the voice for punk rock, but neither did Joe Strummer of the Clash. I was learning that you don't have to sound punk to BE punk. But I was still unsure of what I should do.



And on top of everything I was nervous to put myself out there. I was dealing with a lot of self esteem issues. If I didn't like myself then how was a crowd going to like me?

Some friends and I got together and jammed. I had a few songs to show them but nothing I was too proud of. Then something amazing happened...



The heavens opened up.



You ready?



HELL YES.



AGAIN

AND
AGAIN

AND
AGAIN

We would play those few songs over and over. For some reason it never got old. All we needed was a name and we were a **REAL** band. Scandalmongers is what we settled on. Like most band names it came from some place random and silly. (Our bass player Matt's history text book.) Playing music is the first time I really remember liking myself. I could become someone else easily. The stage felt like an entirely new world, one where I could be cool, sexy, and happy.

Before: Nervous,
awkward.



Also, I got glasses.

After: Confident,
don't give a
shit.

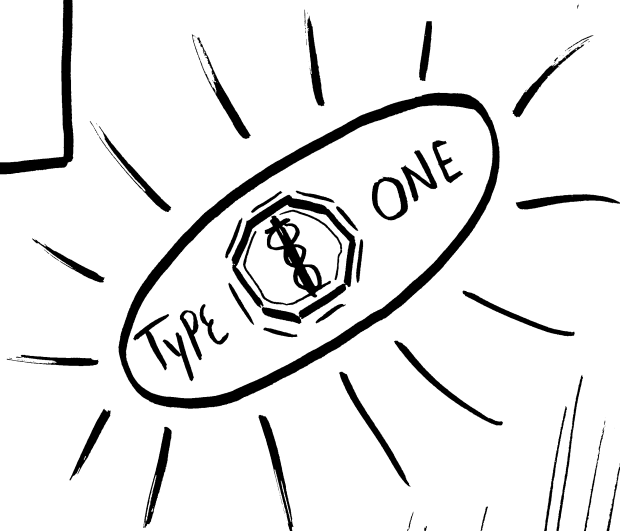


Then something amazing
and terrible happened.



I had been feeling sick for a long
time. But I didn't know what the
cause was. It was really starting to
take a toll on me. The day after I
turned 17 I was diagnosed with
TYPE 1 DIABETES. I actually
considered this to be good news.
I had hated myself for so long
that finding out I had a disease
was a plus.

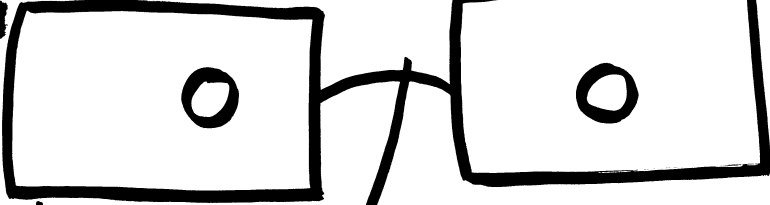
This meant all of
the things that
I hated about me,
weren't my fault.



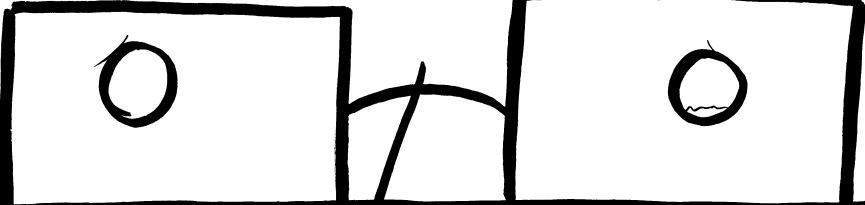
Now, you
will have to
give yourself
4 shots a
day



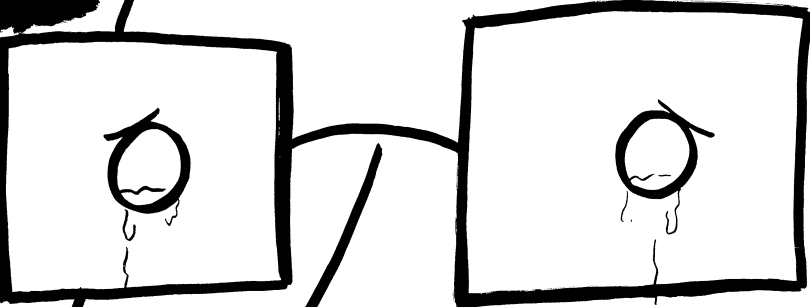
And then it hit me



I'm gonna have to
take medicine just
to feel...



NORMAL.





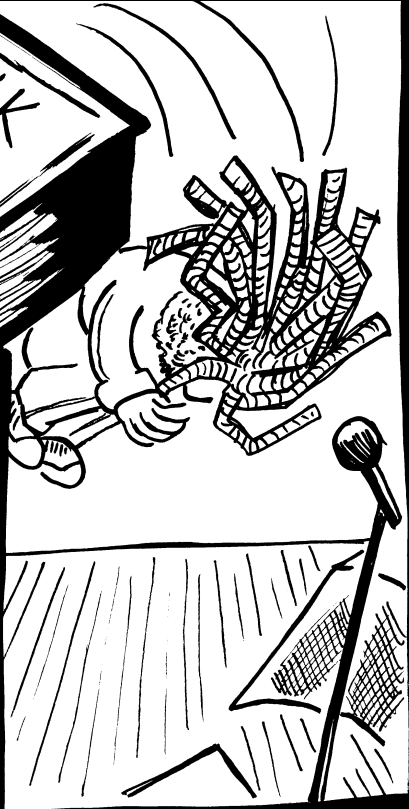
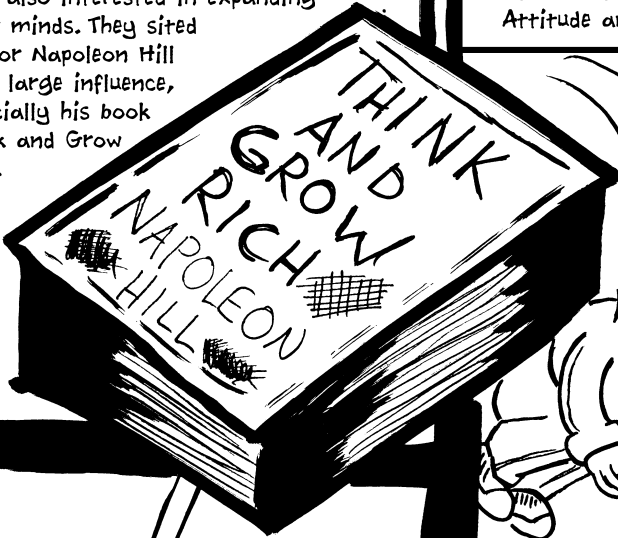
The Bad Brains were an all out force! Nothing could stop their music or their attitude on life. They were able to blend punk, metal, reggae, soul, and hardcore into one genre.

WE GOT THAT ATTITUDE!

They were persistent in their belief that a positive mental attitude could change your outlook.

In addition to expanding the sound and energy of punk music, the Bad Brains were also interested in expanding their minds. They cited author Napoleon Hill as a large influence, especially his book Think and Grow Rich.

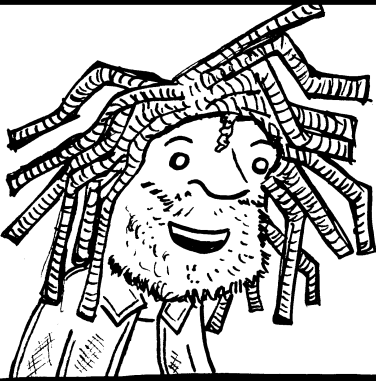
The book talks about the idea that success is all about where your mind is. It gave the Bad Brains the idea of Positive Mental Attitude and they ran with it.



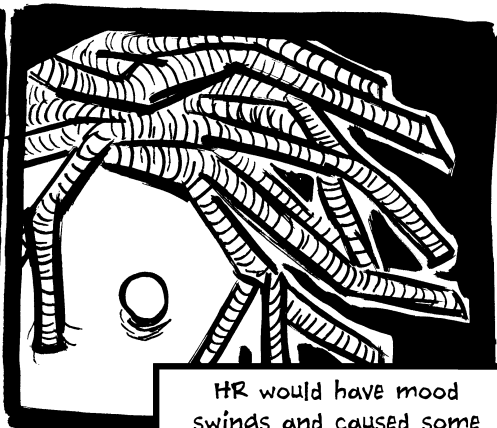
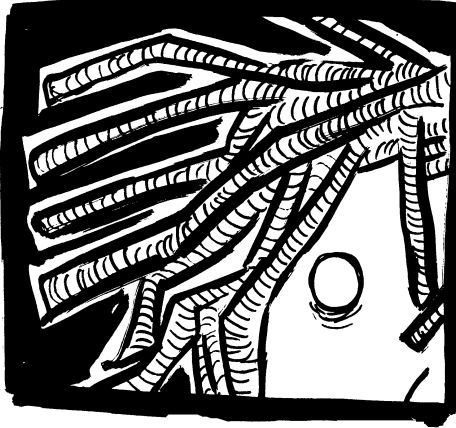
The Bad Brains practiced their asses off. They wanted to be the best band in the world. And they practically were.



HR, the lead singer of the Bad Brains, had his share of troubles. He suffers from schizophrenia and SUNCT syndrome.



SUNCT is a rare disorder and causing extreme headaches out of nowhere.

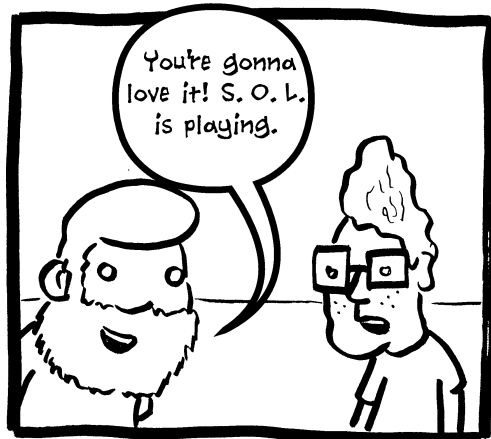


HR would have mood swings and caused some of his bandmates stress. But when HR took the stage... There was nothing like it!

**BAD
BRAINS**



My best friend (and later band mate) Andrew took me to my first "Real" hardcore show sometime after high school. I had seen heavy bands play around town and had become friends with many of them, but something about this show made me feel weird. Maybe I was nervous I would get beat up or something. Either way I had no clue what to expect.



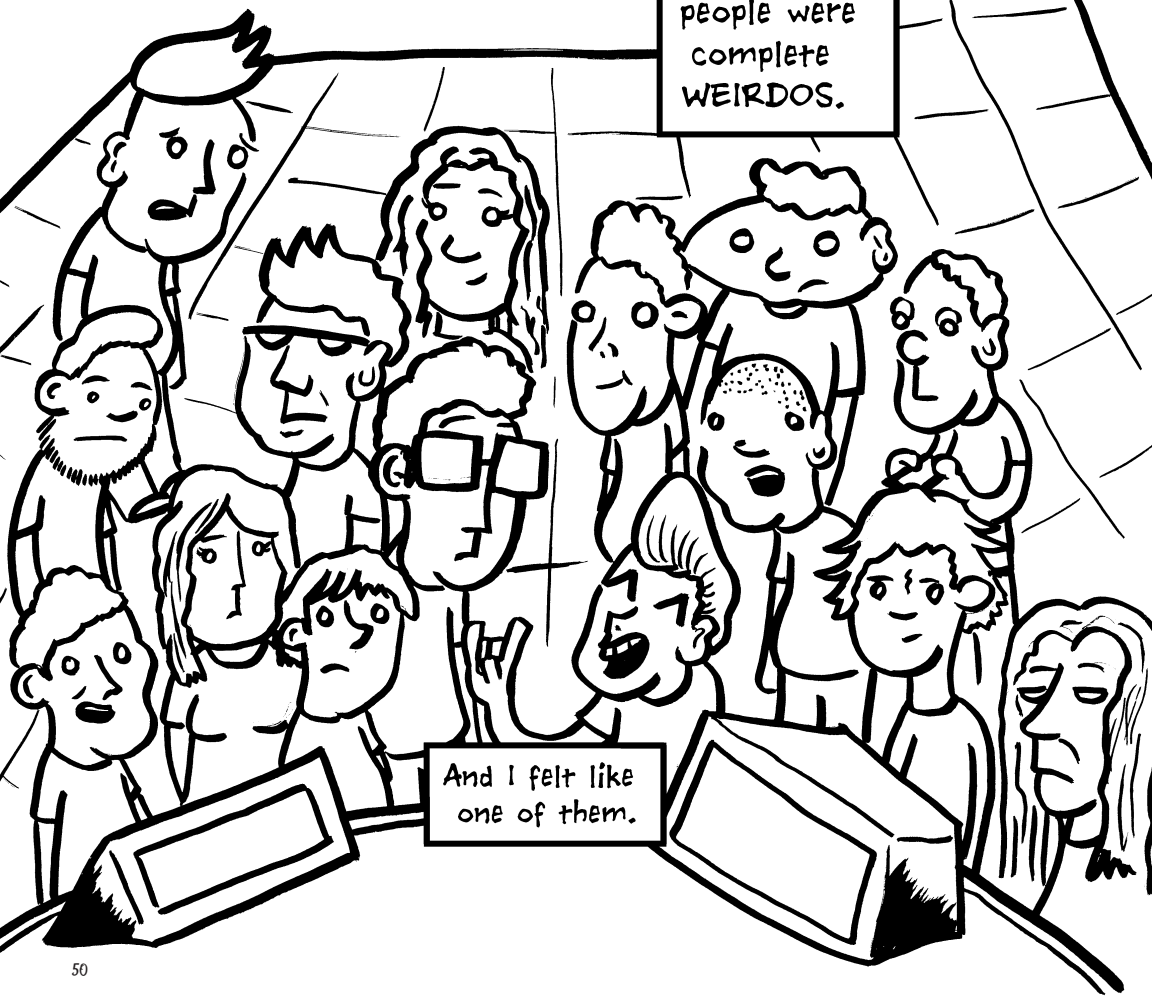
For some reason or another I had built up anxiety about the entire show. Maybe it stems from my fear of being found out as an imposter in the punk world. I wanted to be a part of the secret club that all the punk and hardcore kids were. But what if they didn't accept me? However when Andrew opened the door to that venue it looked. . .



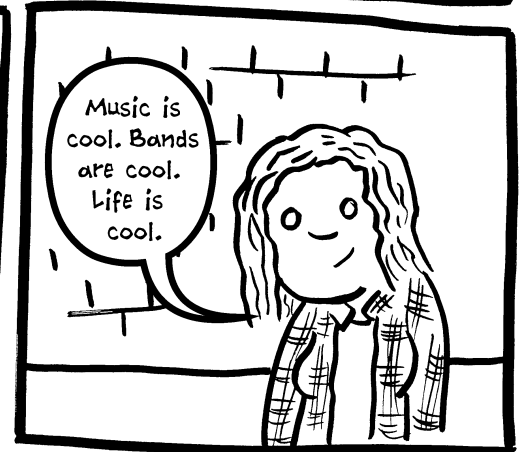
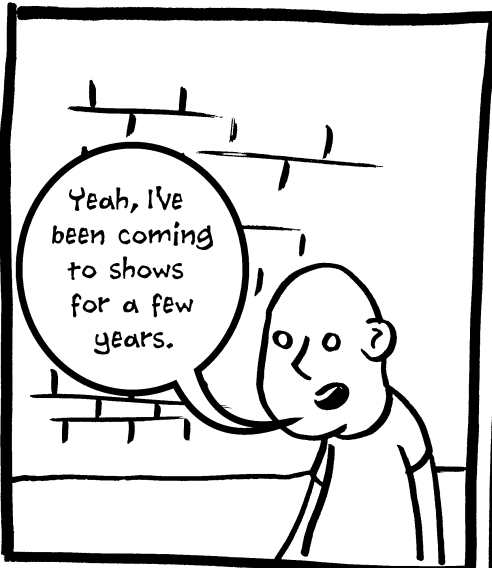
Fucking amazing.

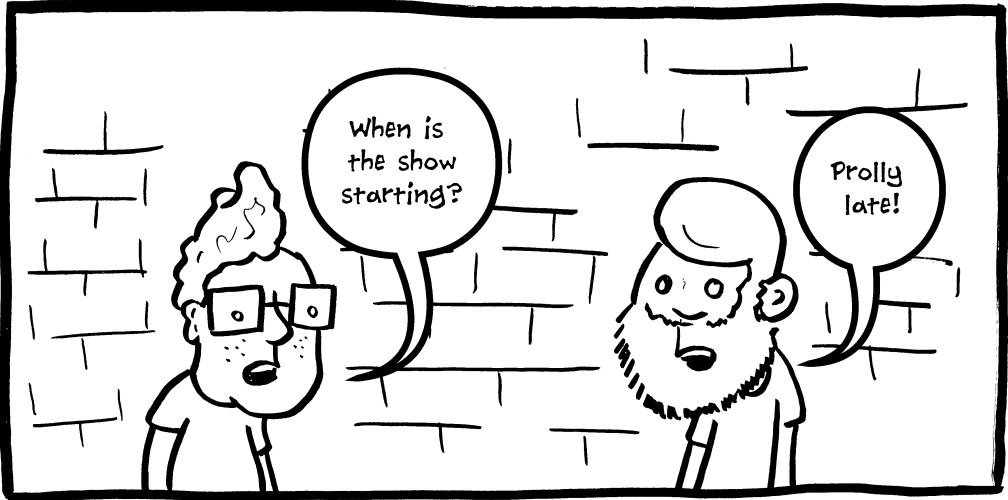
HOLY SHIT

All of these people were complete WEIRDOS.



And I felt like one of them.





The style was different. It was unlike anything I had ever seen. Both awesome and terrifying.

The longer I watched the more welcome I felt. I was starting to understand.

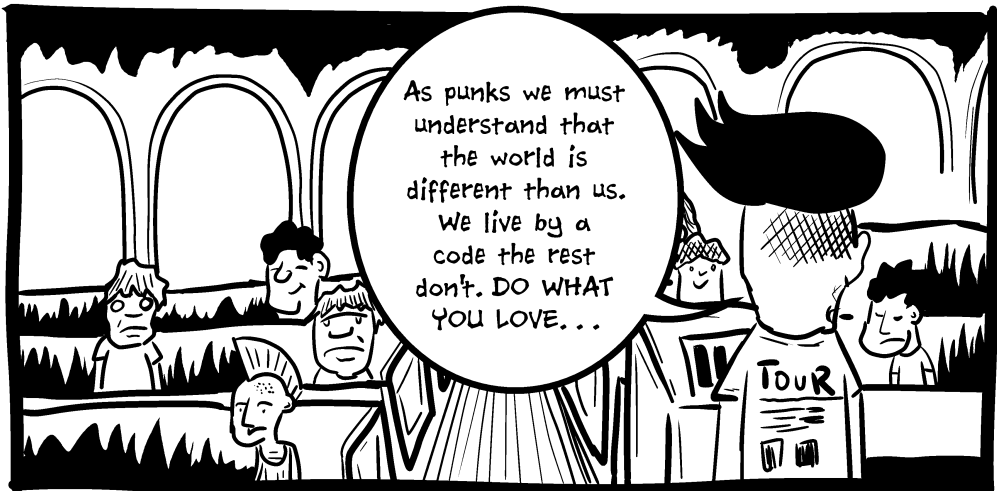




Alright,
thanks for
coming out.
Stay tuned
for WRECK
and S. O. L.



It became
clear to me
this wasn't
a concert...
this was
CHURCH.

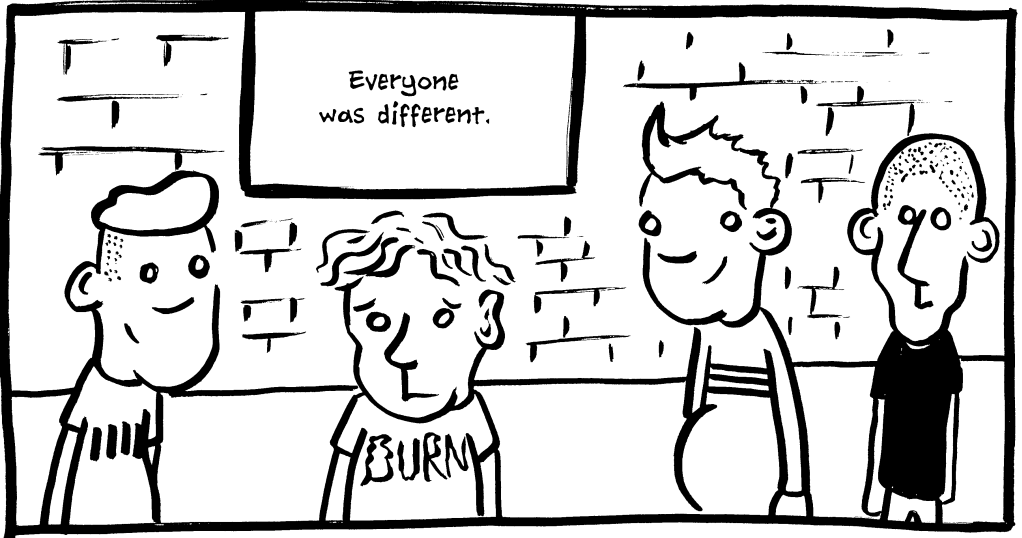




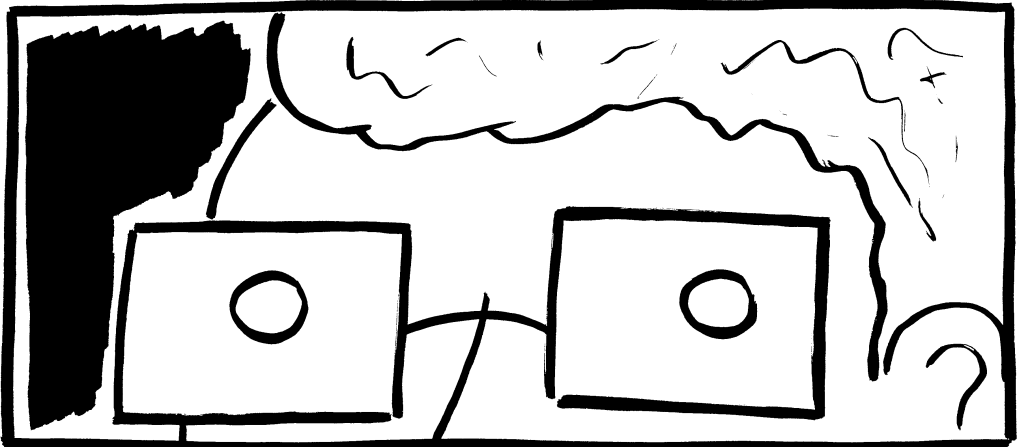
S.O.L. was loud. I mean really loud. The loudest band I've heard to date. It was so crazy to see a band be that RAW and POWERFUL.

SCREAM





The crowds, the bands,
the room itself were
all part of a bigger
picture. And I only
knew one thing for
sure...
I WANTED IN.





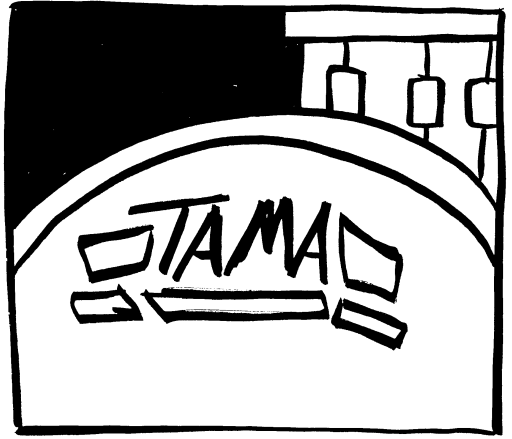
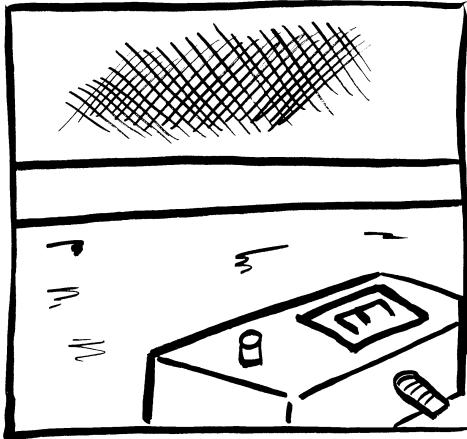
Alright people
listen up!
We see a lot
of venues and
I gotta tell
you this.



It feels great
to be here with
you all. I got
into hardcore
because I didn't
feel like I was
normal.

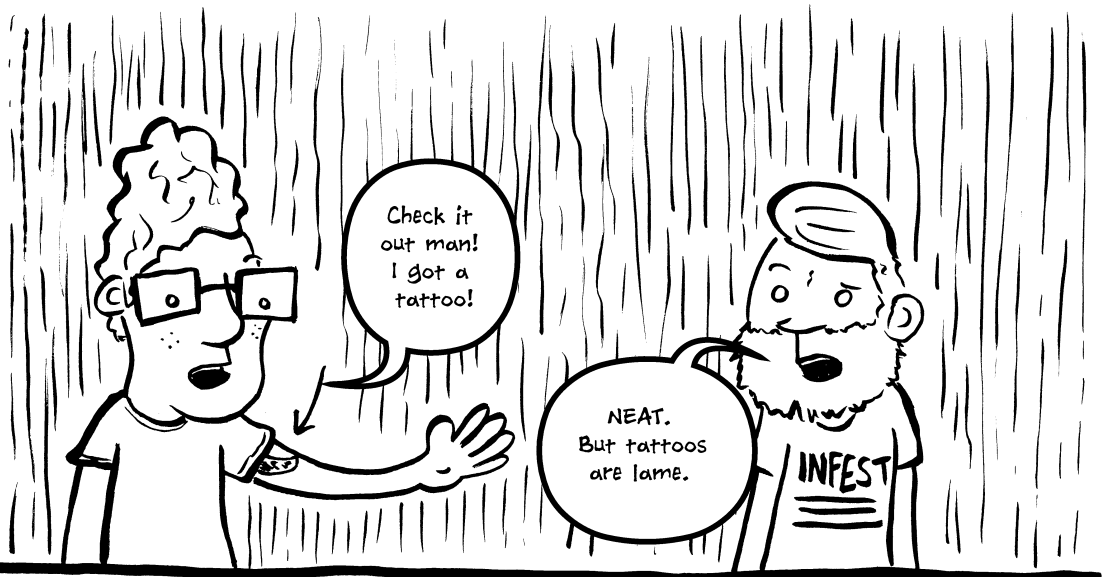


"And when I went
to my first show
I saw that nobody
was normal. And I'll
be damned if hardcore
becomes normal!"

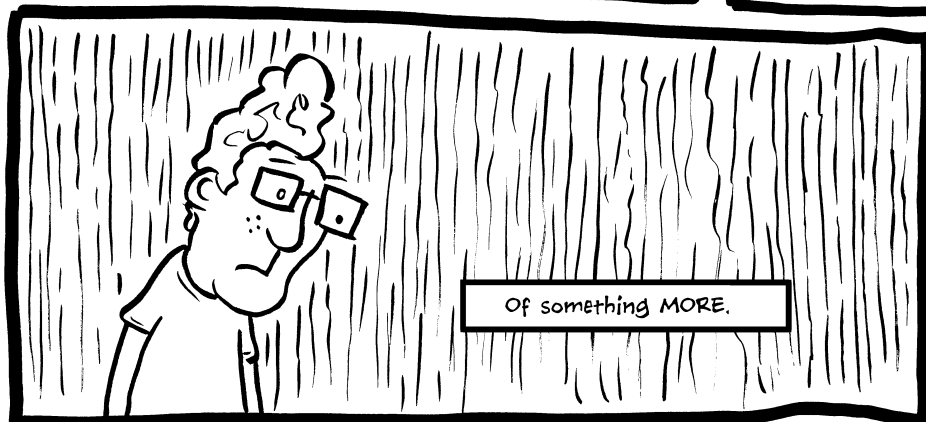


This speech hit home with me. I finally felt like I had found a place where I could be myself.

This was more than a riff and moshing. This was real.



I was trying so hard to fit in. I just wanted to be a part...



Andrew joined Scandalmongers and I joined 2 other bands with him.

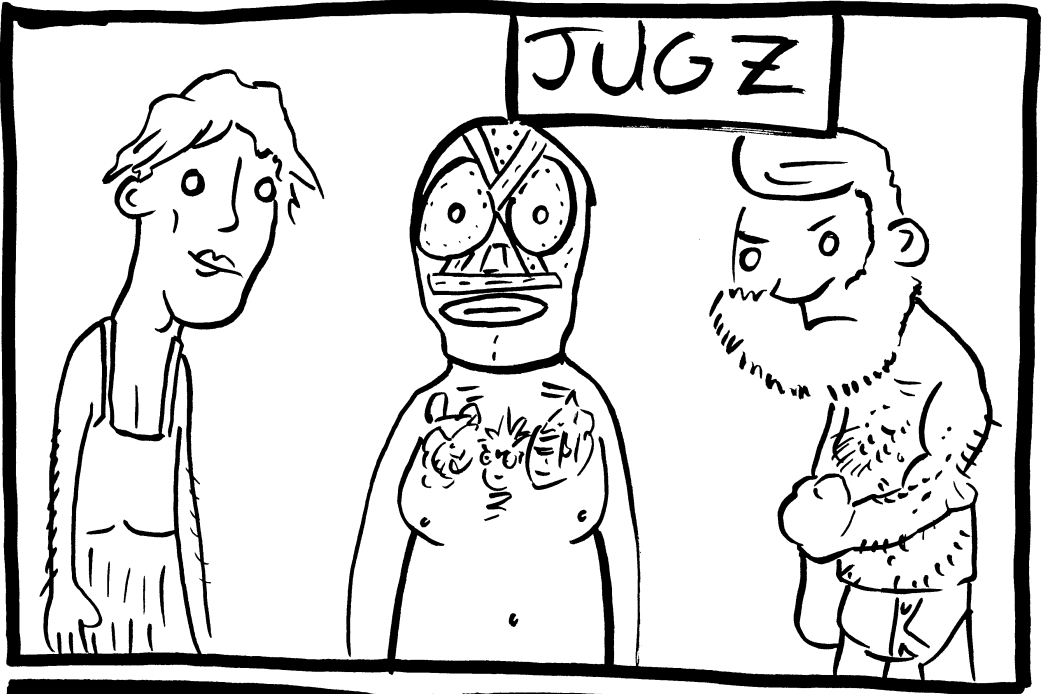
WHEN IS PRACTICE?

Scandal-mongers at 12, One Step at 1:30 and JUGZ after that!

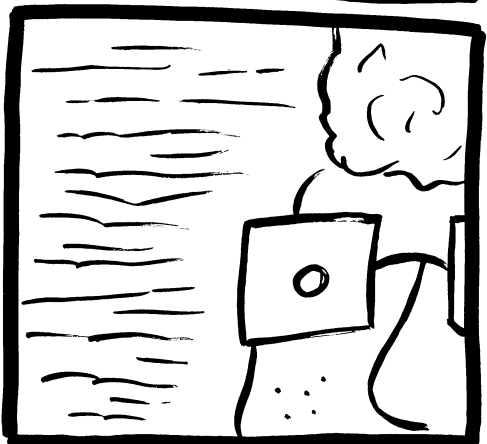
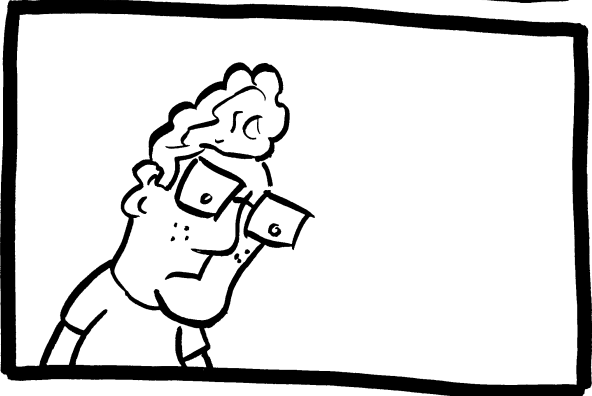
SCANDALMONGERS

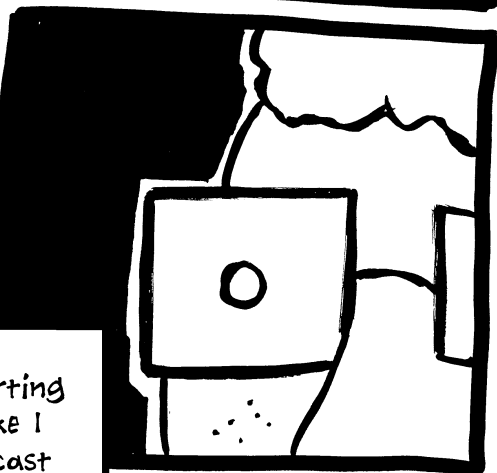
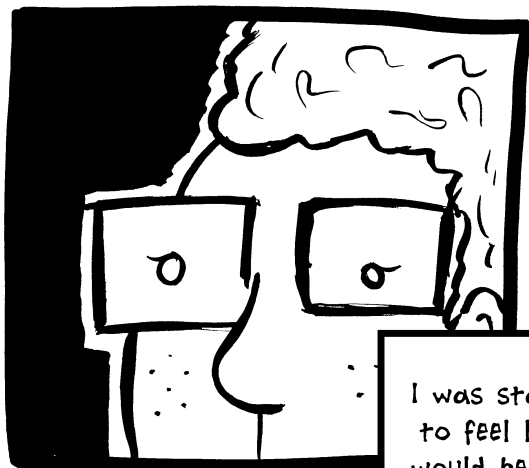
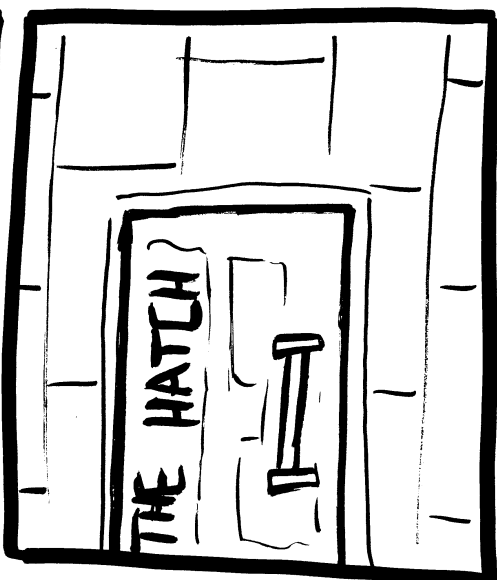
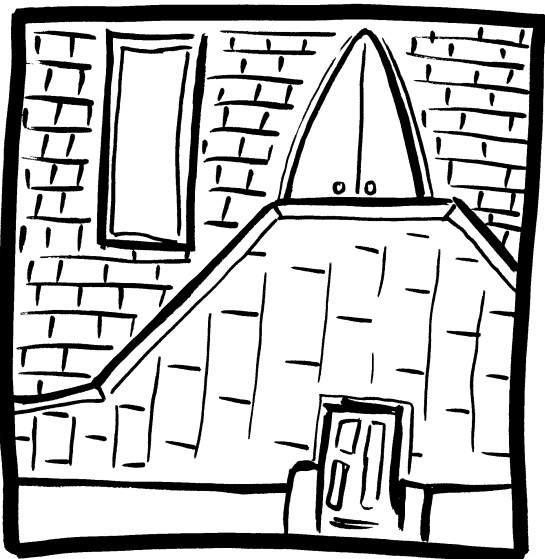


ONE STEP

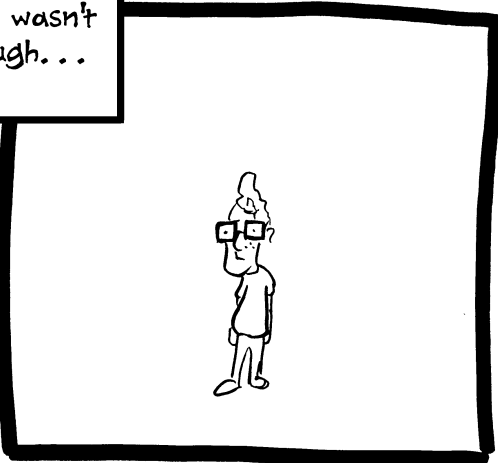


I had joined all these other bands trying to fill something inside me. I was looking for identity and I wasn't finding what I wanted.

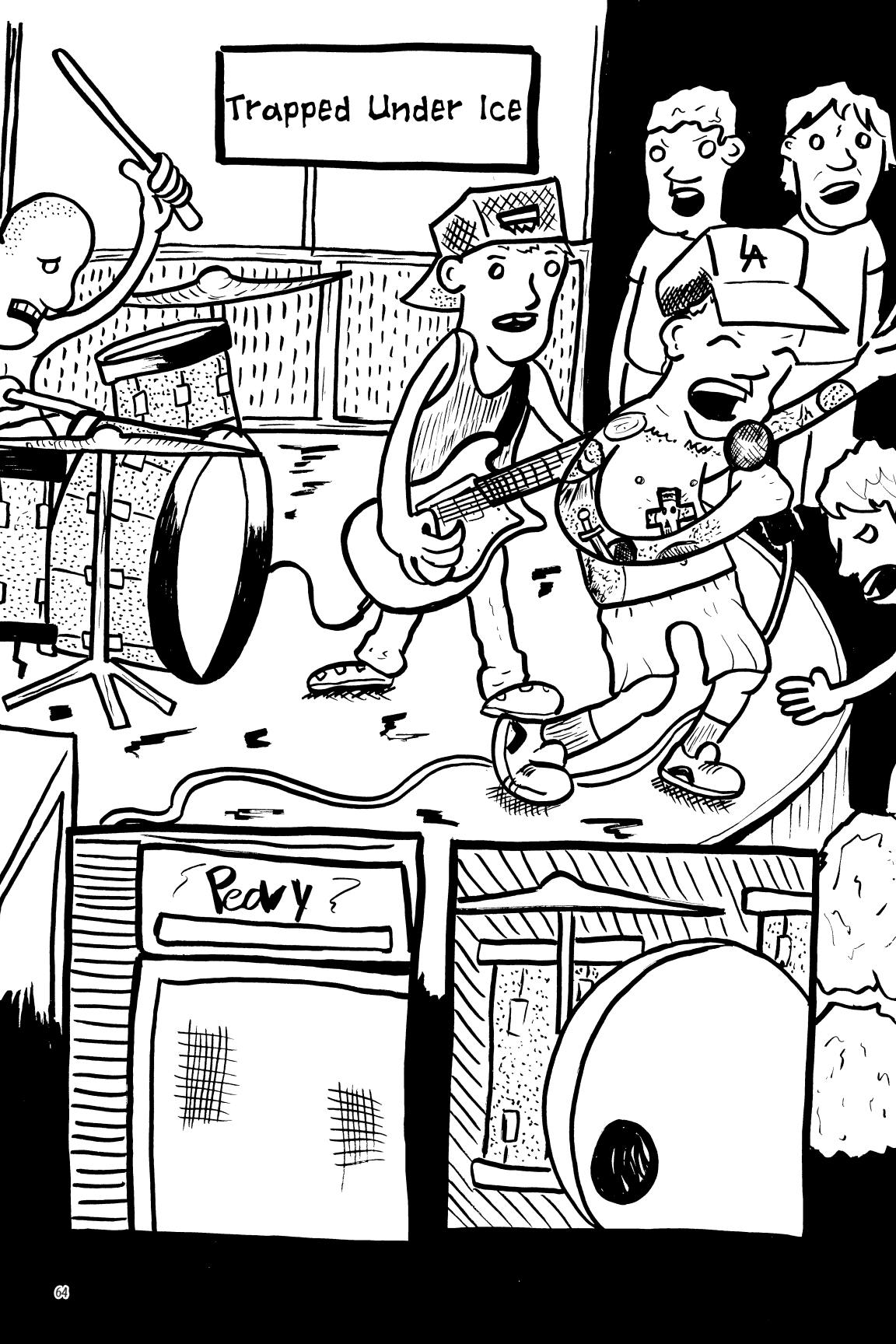




I was starting to feel like I would be cast out. Like I wasn't cool enough...



Trapped Under Ice



STAY GOLD AH



I saw Trapped Under Ice play at The Hatch in 2010. This was the first bigger hardcore show I had been to. There were way too many people there and the place was going nuts. I remember getting kicked in the head. . . TWICE.

I was actually proud to be kicked. To me it meant I was paying my dues in the mosh pit. It was another notch on my **HARDCORE BED POST**.

I was still worried that I didn't have enough tattoos, cool shirts, or patches on my camo vest. My mental health was weighing down on me pretty heavily, yet I wasn't doing anything to lift it back up. All I was doing was trying to distract myself with anything and everything I could. And I had a new mission. . . listen to as much hardcore as possible.

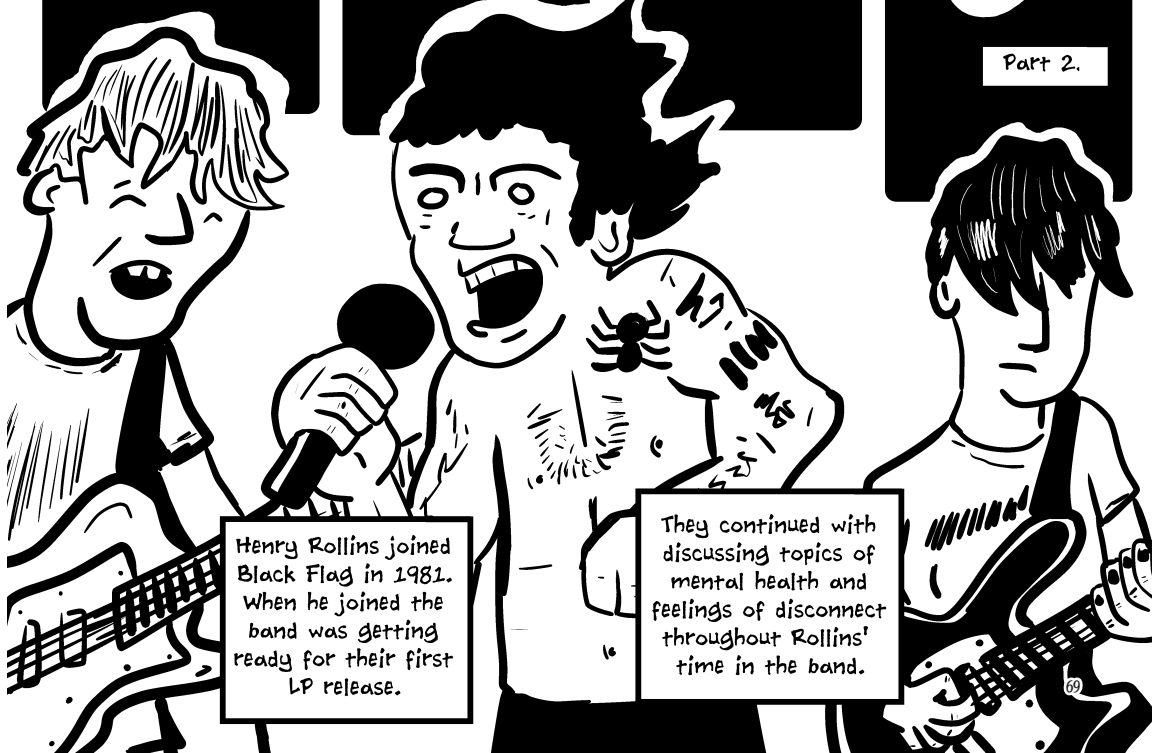


Part 2

BLACK

FLAG

Part 2.



Henry Rollins joined Black Flag in 1981. When he joined the band was getting ready for their first LP release.

They continued with discussing topics of mental health and feelings of disconnect throughout Rollins' time in the band.

Black Flag pushed the envelope of hardcore music. Changing the style of music as well as the lyrical content.

"Swimming in the mainstream, it's such a lame dream!"

"Depression's got a hold of me"

"I get so wound up, I feel so let down."

They were weirdos. They had grown up in a Reagan America and were fighting against what they swore they would never be...
NORMAL.

On stage Henry was a powderkeg of energy and emotion. Sometimes he would even attack fans as they would often show violence toward him and the band.



Although, Henry's on stage persona was beginning to take control.



Bill Stevenson joined the band in 1982. He is still to this day considered one of the best punk drummers of all time.

Black Flag during this time was an unstoppable force.



They spoke out about mental health and real feelings.



Black Flag never wavered from their beliefs.

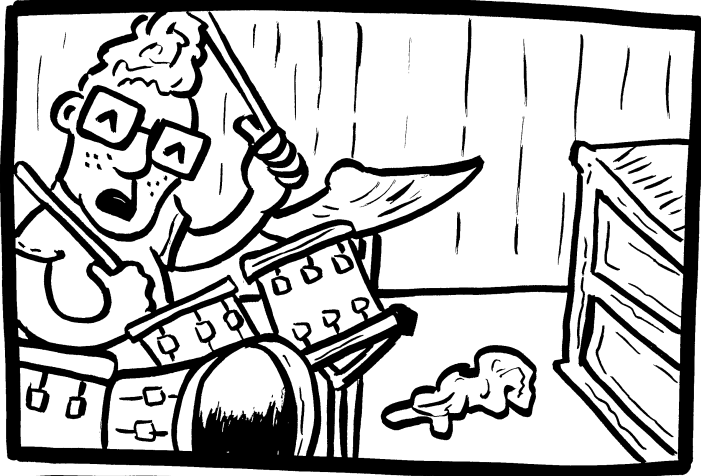


Their music continues to help people to this day.

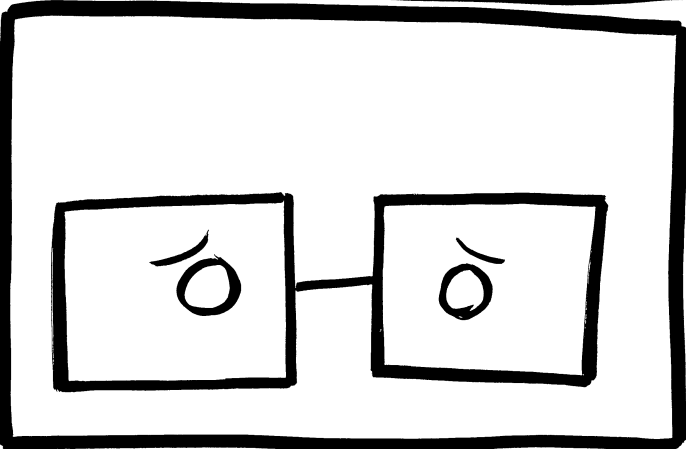




I was practicing with every band all the time. I figured that if I was feeling busy, then I was feeling something. I was desperate to create something amazing for the world. I wanted my shot to do music for a living.



I had no idea if it was even possible to make this dream a reality. But I always had one rule. . . Practice and perform like you are playing for thousands every single time.



But in the back of my mind, I knew it couldn't be done.

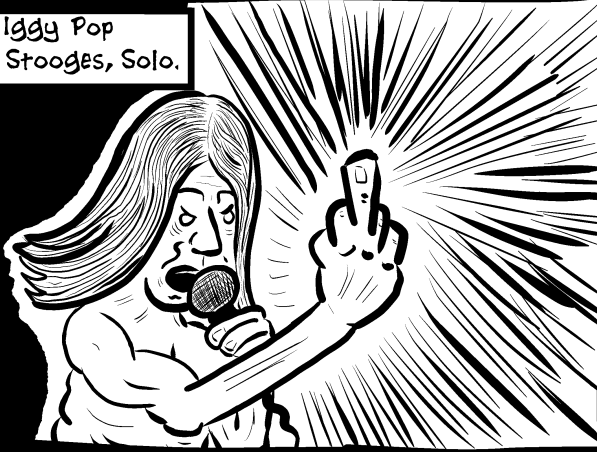
Punk has had its fair share of mental illness throughout the years.
Even going as far back the 1960s.

Ray Davies -The Kinks



He was the lead singer for The Kinks. Starting in the 1960s they still had a fierce sound. Ray had attempted suicide in 1973, and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. He had outbursts towards his band mates often.

Iggy Pop
-The Stooges, Solo.



The original "Godfather of Punk." Iggy Pop did what he wanted, when he wanted. He founded the Stooges in 1967 and transformed performance style and attitude. He had a long battle with addiction and has spoke about depression when his friend and collaborator David Bowie passed way.

Billie Joe Armstrong
-Green Day



Billie is no stranger to speaking out on opinions and beliefs. He suffers from panic attacks and crippling anxiety. He even wrote a song about how it feels when having a panic attack. He was prescribed medication for his anxiety but in 2012 he began seeking treatment for substance abuse of both the meds and alcohol.



One Step was my real connection to hardcore. We practiced and I would take what I learned and practice more.



One Step was getting some out of town shows and they... well...



What do you have to listen to?



I have the NOFX live record?

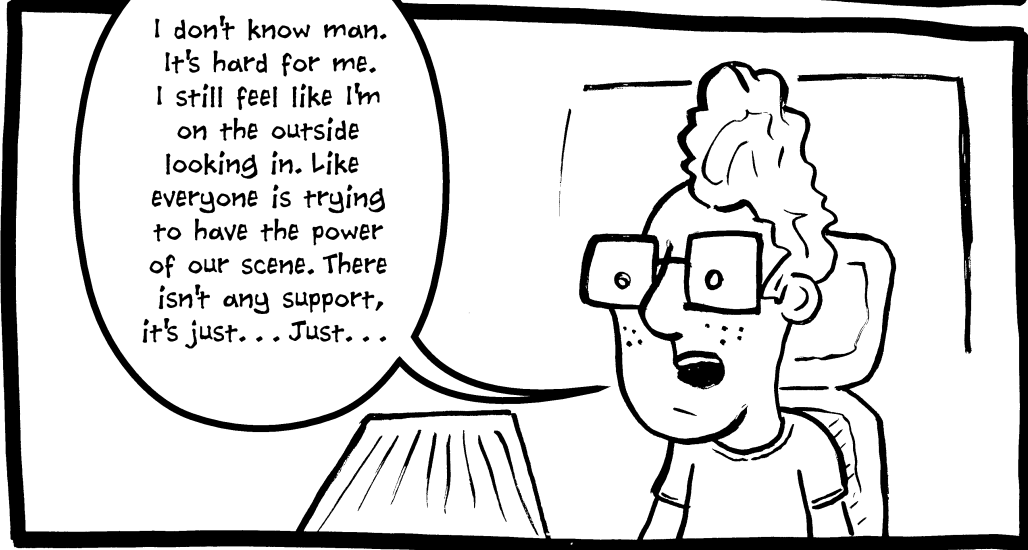


Aaron was the vocalist of One Step. We hadn't really spent much time together until we drove the van to a show in Louisville, KY. We listened to that NOFX live record the whole way. Aaron even knew the stage banter by memory. We talked about how we felt about the music scene as well.

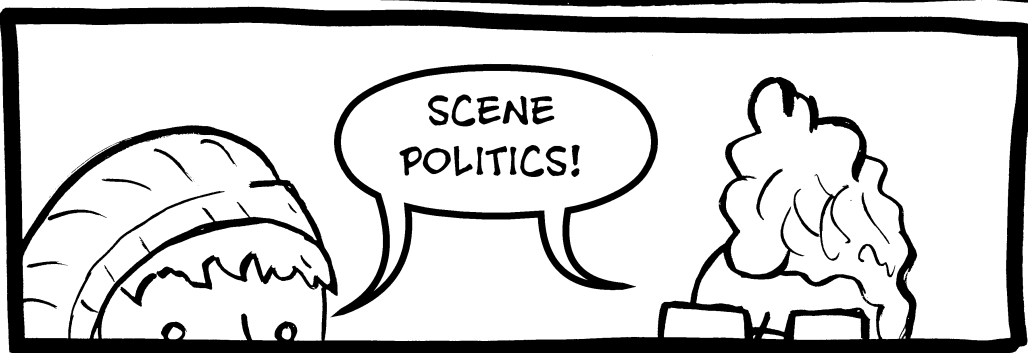




Sometimes I wish that things could be more like they were back when we had shelter-house shows. Ya know? Set up and just play.



I don't know man. It's hard for me. I still feel like I'm on the outside looking in. Like everyone is trying to have the power of our scene. There isn't any support, it's just... Just...



SCENE POLITICS!



I get worried that I'm not meant to be a part of this scene. Like punk is for the weirdos... What if I'm too weird to be a punk?

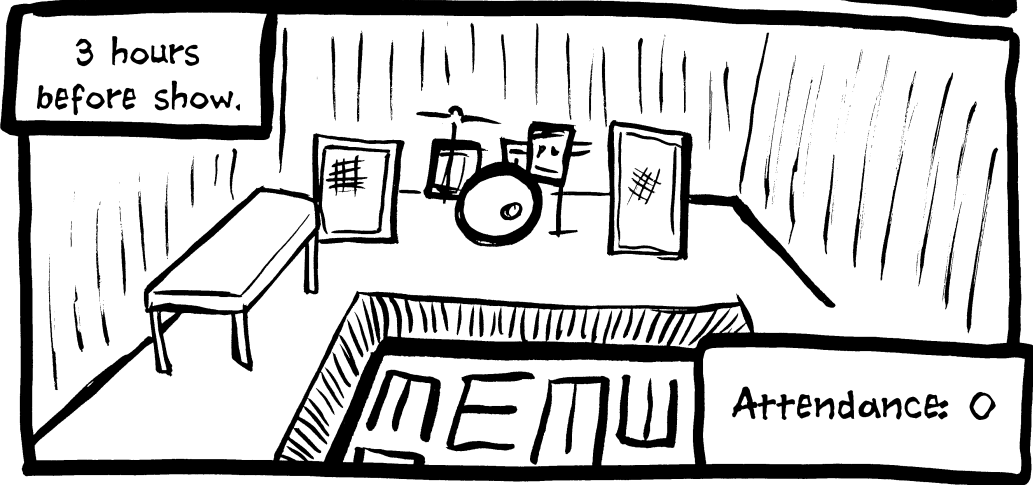


Best thing I can tell you is forget it. It's scene politics and stupid shit.



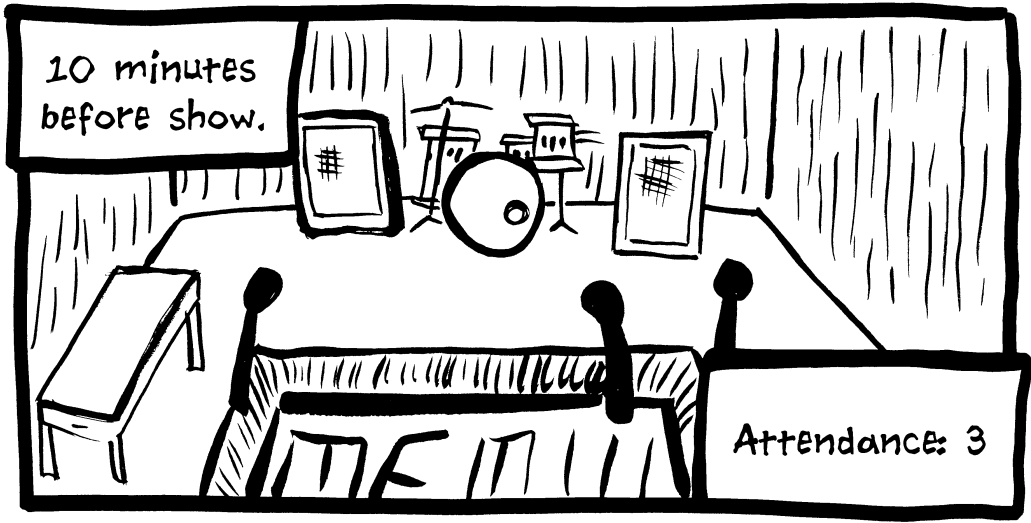


We showed up a little early as usual.



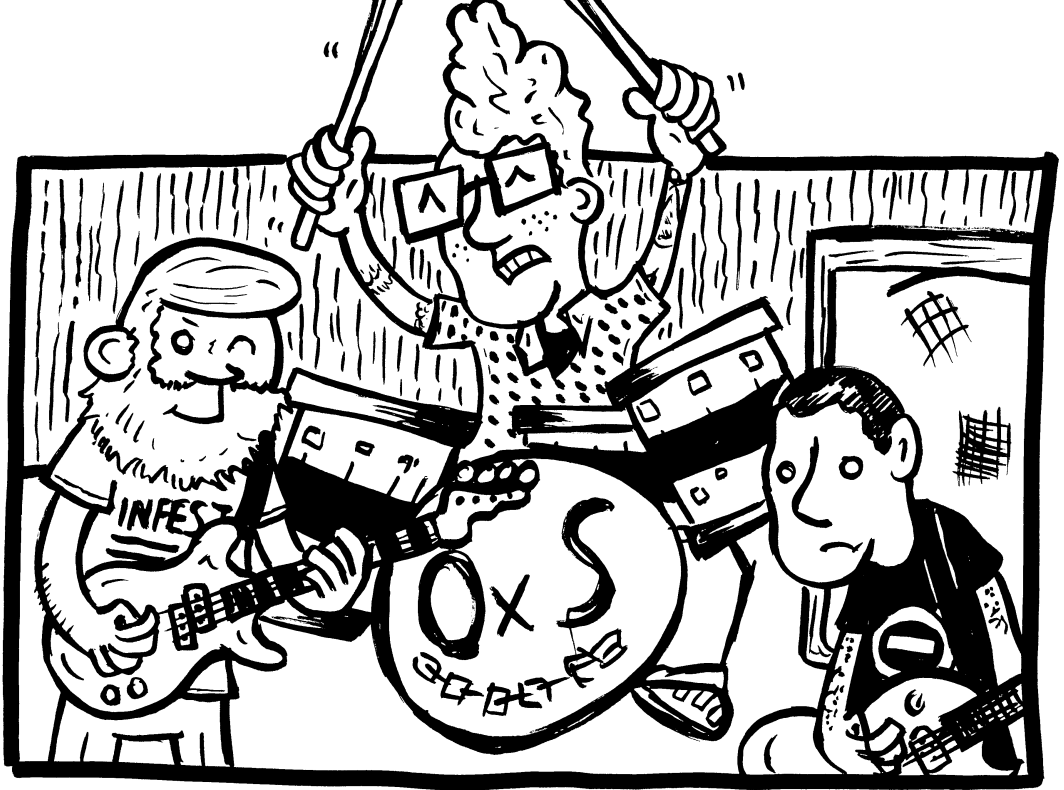
3 hours before show.

Attendance: 0



10 minutes before show.

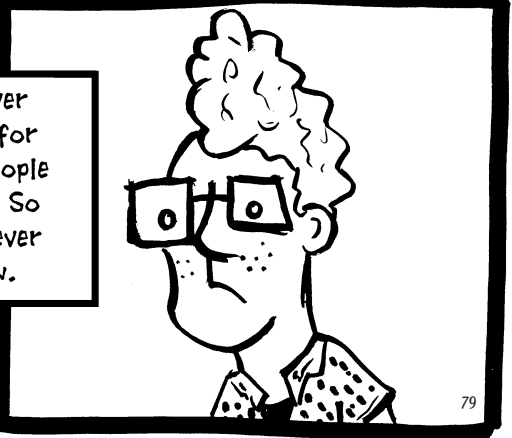
Attendance: 3



One Step
always
played hard.
For 2 people
or 200.



We never
played for
200 people
though. So
we'll never
know.

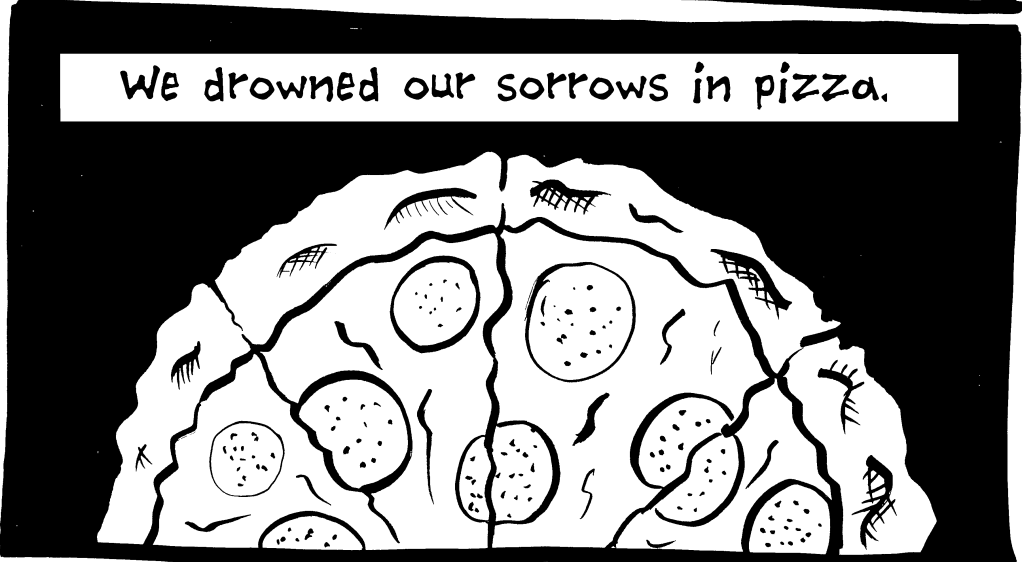




The few people
did mosh for
us. Pity mosh
is still mosh.



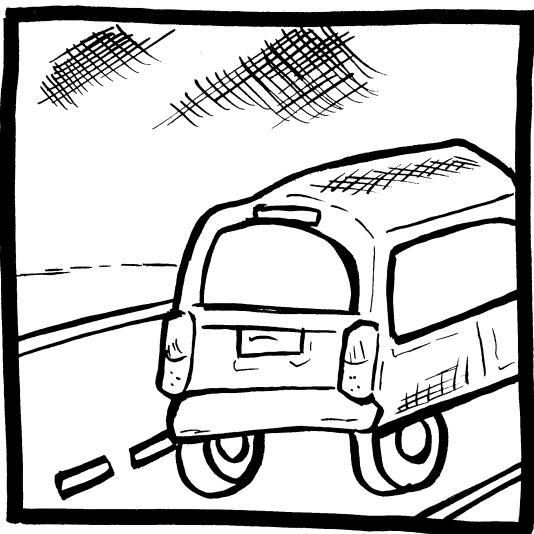
We did
what any
band does
after a bad
show.



We drowned our sorrows in pizza.



Aaron played
R. Kelly 4
times.



Aaron and I talked more on the drive home. We had eaten so much pizza and drank so much soda we were WIRED.

After shows I often spend the drive home blowing things out of proportion. It always feels like the end of the world when things don't go perfect. I wasn't liking who these shows were turning me into.

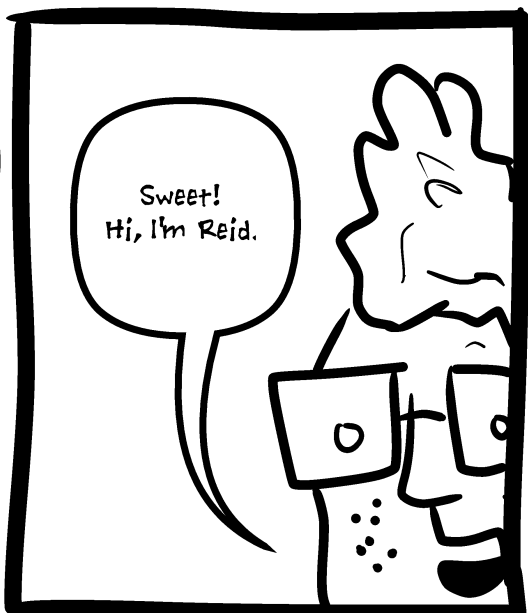
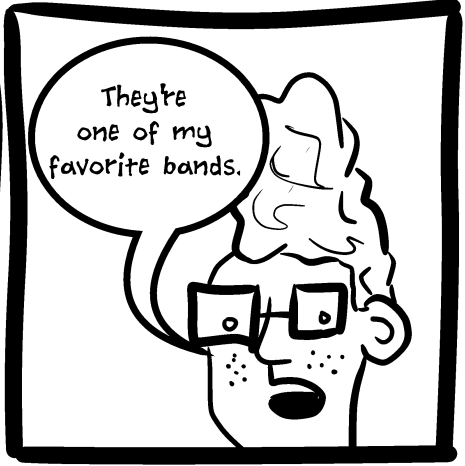
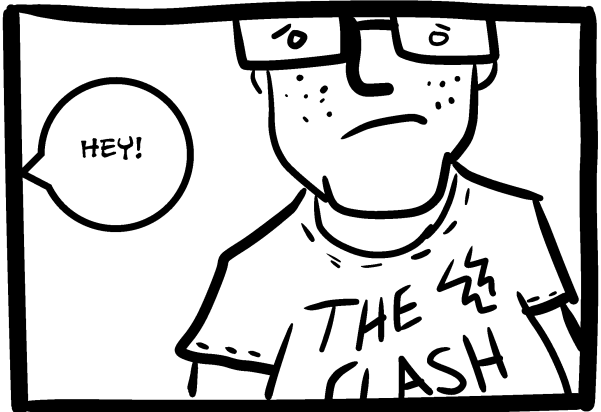
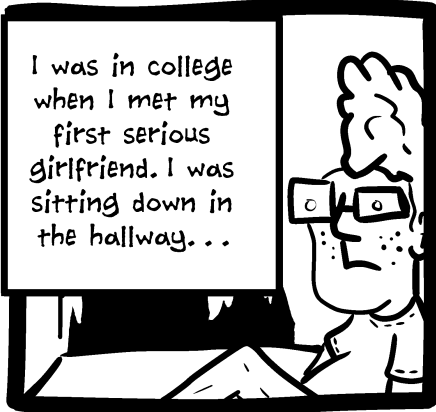


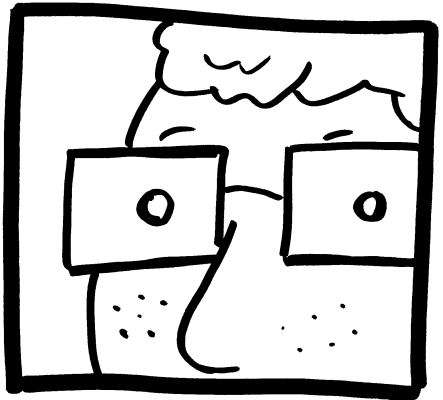
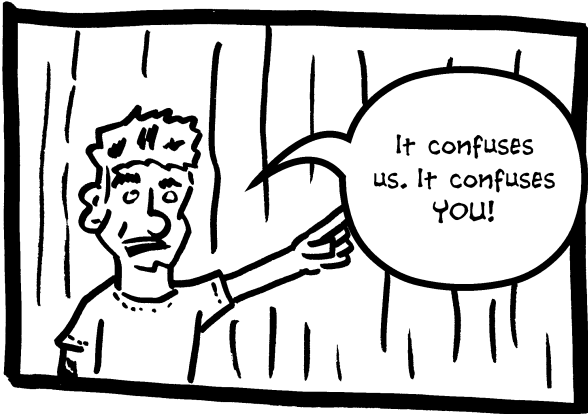
For me it's all about having fun.

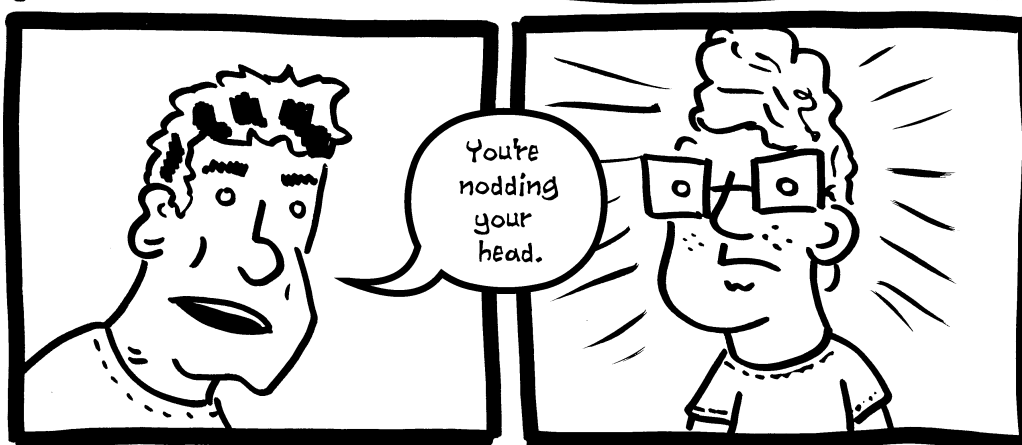
I usually get all caught up in my own shit. I can't even have fun!



It's definitely easy to get lost in the thought of playing music. But in the end I get to play music and eat pizza. So win, win.









I was still trying to play shows as much as I could.



When she came to see me play.



Hey! You came?

Yeah! I really liked it. I want to get a CD!



You seem way different when you're on stage.

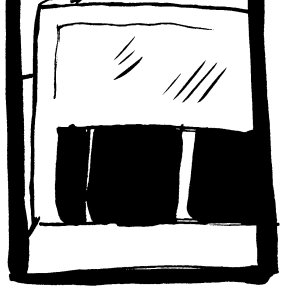



Really? Is that a good thing.



I think so.

Soon we started dating. I never let myself get used to a serious relationship. I felt pressure to be the person on the stage.





Scandal mongers were in the process of making what would become our last album. I had decided to propose to my girlfriend very early. I thought I was ready, I thought I knew what I wanted. But deep down I was scared and I felt completely empty inside.

I tried to take our band seriously.



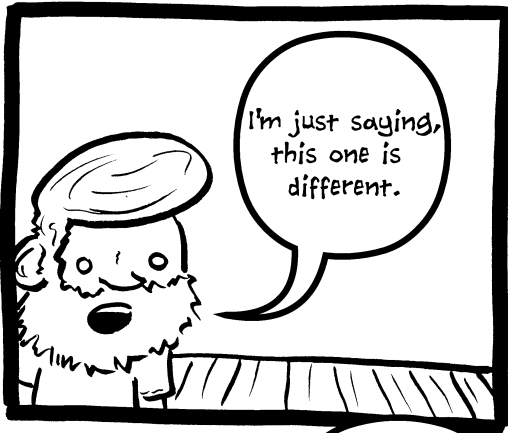
THIS IS ALL I HAVE!

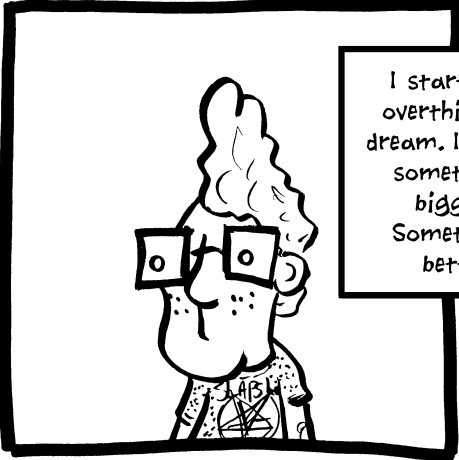
We could have a song called "Edward Cymbal Hands" and it's all like this. SEE?! IT'S LIKE HAVING TWO DRUMMERS!!!

TAP TAP TAP

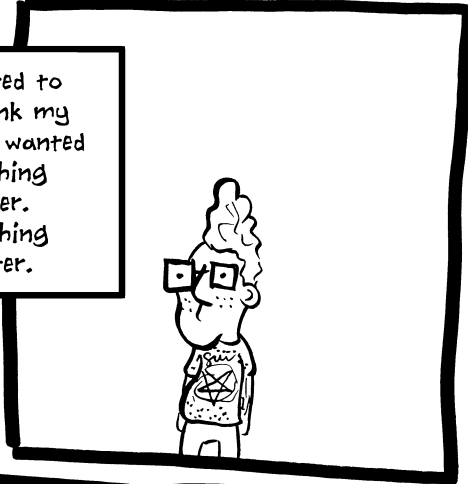
But it didn't always work that way.

On the phone with Scott.
(He recorded the album)





I started to
overthink my
dream. I wanted
something
bigger.
Something
better.

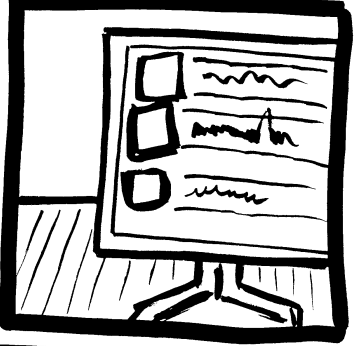
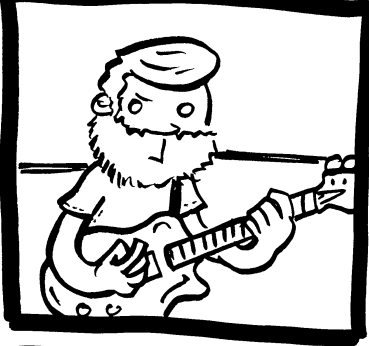


This record is
gonna be different
and a lot cooler. I'm
excited!



I wish
I was.

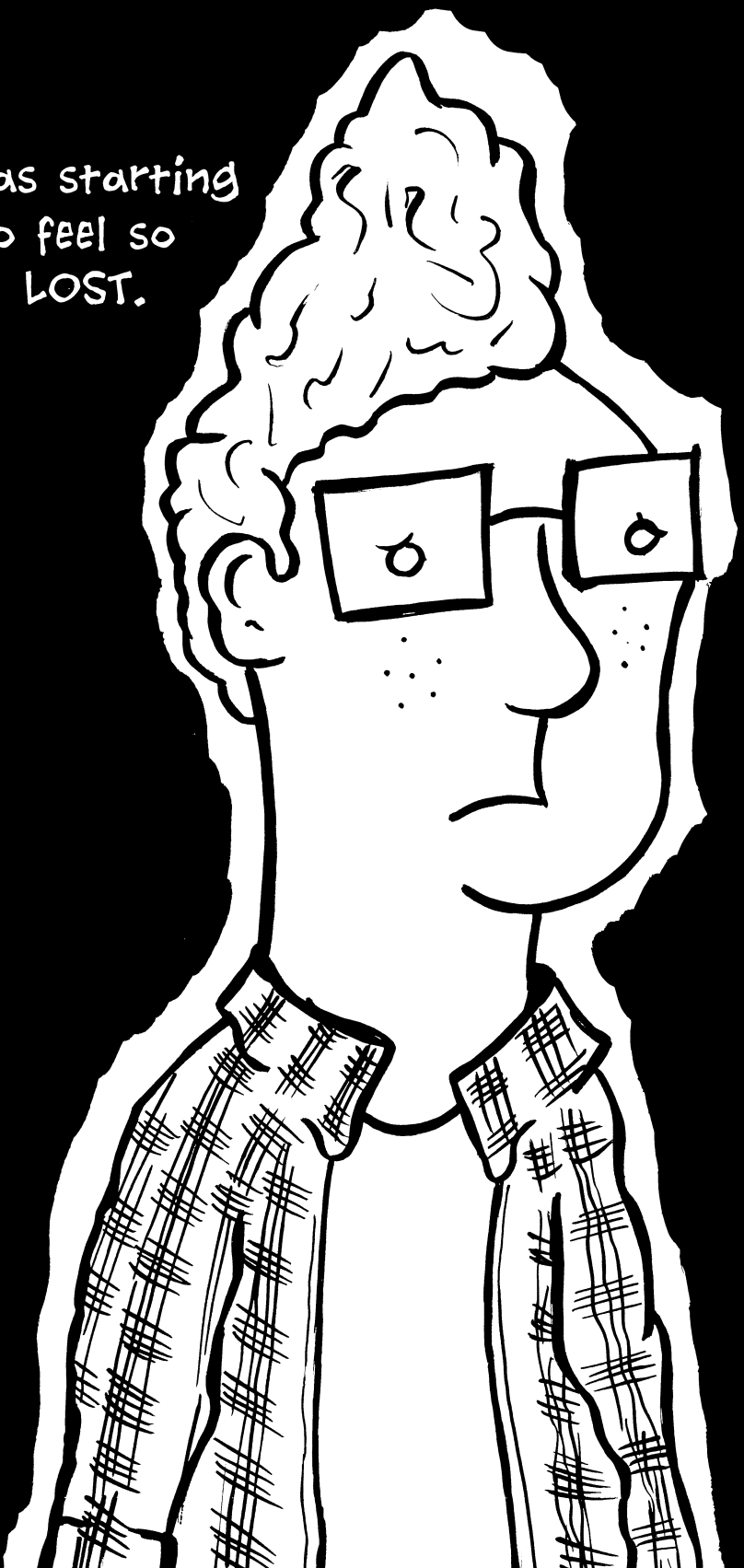
Recording begins.



I was nervous.
I wanted the
record done ASAP.
And...



I was starting
to feel so
LOST.



THE REPLACEMENTS

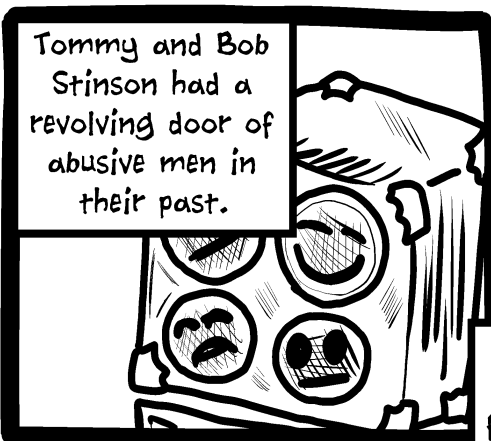


The Replacements are a huge influence on modern rock and punk music. Paul, Tommy, Bob, and Chris gained a following for their live performances and pure punk rock attitude, but usually they were too drunk or stoned to stand.



Much like The Clash, The Replacements felt pressure to be the best band in the world. They had a fear of being so big that they would fail. The Clash dealt with it by expanding the genre and making their place in history. The Replacements dealt with it by drinking, pills, and cocaine.

Tommy and Bob Stinson had a revolving door of abusive men in their past.



They said after they would drink all the fear and anxiety went out the window.



Paul Westerburg was the driving force behind the songs



Bassist Tommy Stinson told Bob Mehr, "There was a lot of medicating happening and not really knowing what we were medicating for. Paul is the first to tell you today, 'I have a problem with depression.' He didn't know what it was then.



They dealt with their problems in very juvenile ways and it ended up causing more problems, even resulting in the death of founding member Bob Stinson.

Their album LET IT BE combined punk attitude with sincere songwriting.

As the band continued, Paul was afraid that Bob would take over as a stronger writer, causing tensions to rise.



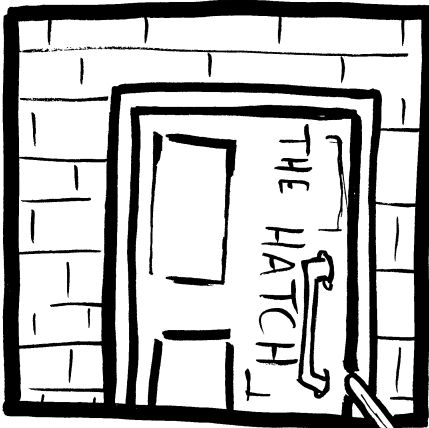
LET IT BE

I found The Replacements by following the long list of acts influenced by them.

Fans refer to their last show as "It ain't over til the fat roadie sings/plays" due to the fact that the band slowly left the stage during the performance and were replaced by their roadies.



The Replacements actually allowed themselves to be REPLACED.







During the show
I don't really
remember much.
We played 10
songs or so. But
I was in a trance.

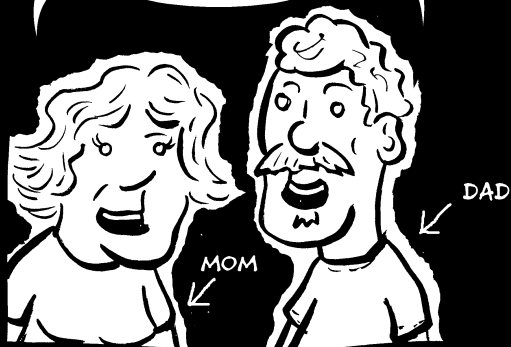
We ended the show with a confetti explosion.



Man, that felt weird.



We're so proud of you.



We spent months working on this music and when we finally released the album it left me feeling hollow.

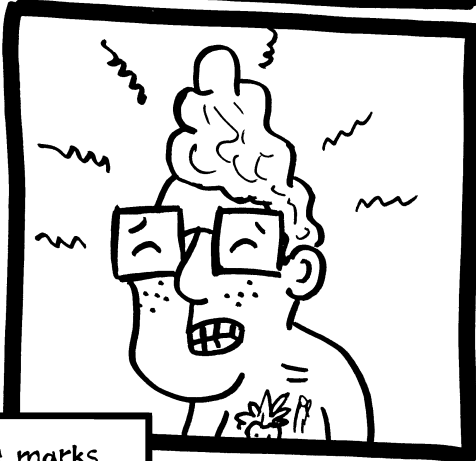
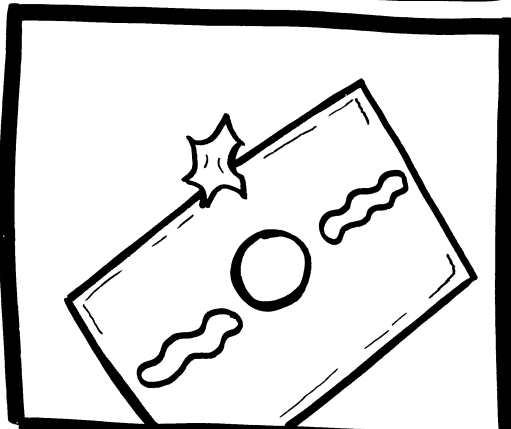
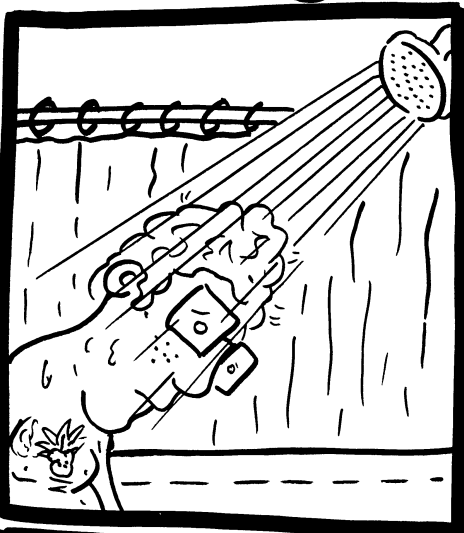




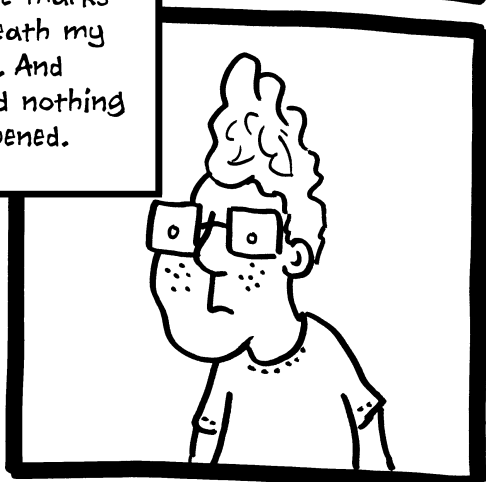
She was right. I was trying to be someone else. . . MYSELF. When I was trying to be my true self I felt like I was never heard.

Trigger Warning!

After that show is the first time I remember cutting myself. I got back to my dorm room and took a shower then took a razor from my shaving kit and did it. Looking back I don't really know why I did it. Maybe I wanted to feel something other than hollow. But instead all I felt was guilt and shame. Nothing had changed, and it didn't feel like it was ever going to.

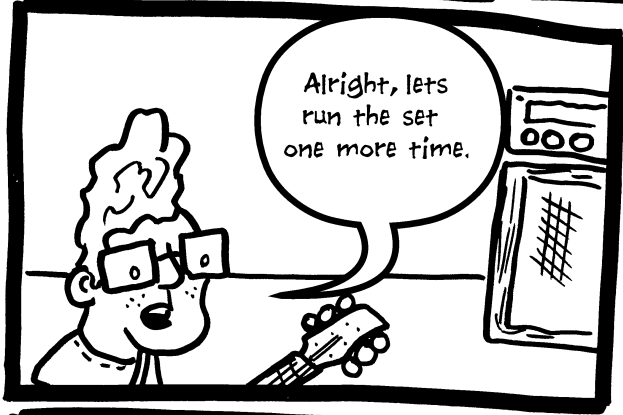


I hid the marks underneath my shirt. And pretended nothing happened.

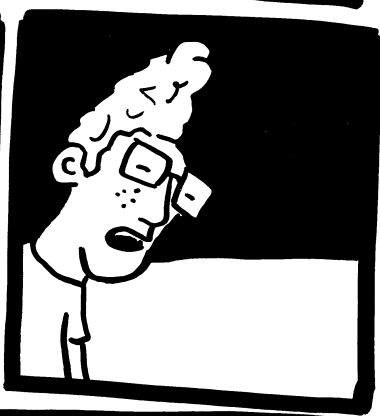




I went about my normal day. I didn't want anyone to know something could be wrong.



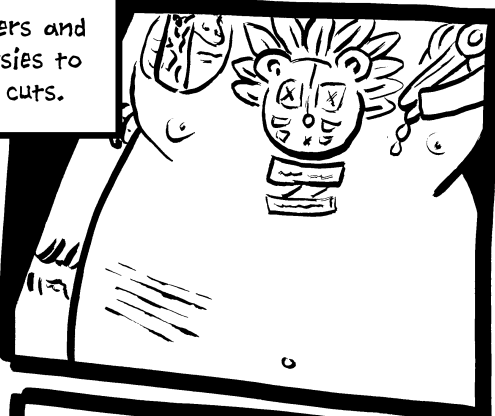
Alright, lets run the set one more time.



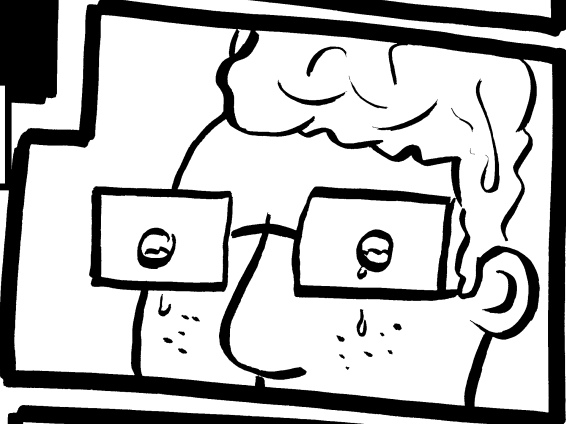
I hid my self-harm from everyone. My family, my friends, my fiance, I didn't think I was worth anything. I spent so much time putting my faith in everything else that I never put faith in myself.



I wore layers and hockey jerseys to hide my cuts.



I did nothing to deal with these feelings, I'd just hide.



I distanced myself from everyone. I thought it made me weak to talk about my problems. I also felt so much guilt and shame about it. I felt pathetic and worthless.

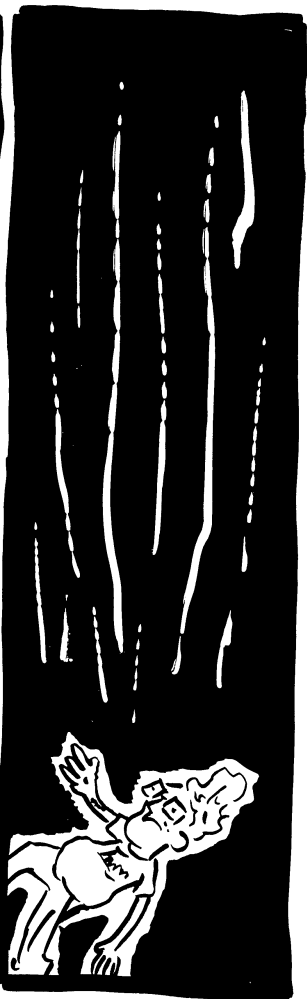




Everything was crumbling underneath me.



I was falling.



Part 3

KEITH MORRIS (original vocalist of Black Flag, Circle Jerks, OFF!)



When I first saw videos of Keith Morris I thought he was the most "Burned Out" person I had ever seen. And at the same time, he was so freaking cool.



In addition to helping start bands like Black Flag, Circle Jerks, and OFF! Keith also helped bring both mental and physical health the front of peoples minds. He suffered drug addiction and alcoholism for most of his life. He did eventually become sober in 1989. He was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in 1999 and had to be hospitalized for Diabetic Ketoacidosis in 2008. The bands that Keith was in held nothing back. When they stepped out on that stage they left everything out there. It was insane. It was ridiculous. It was irresponsible. And it was REAL.

My fiance and I had started renting a house.

And one night I was doing the dishes when she came home.



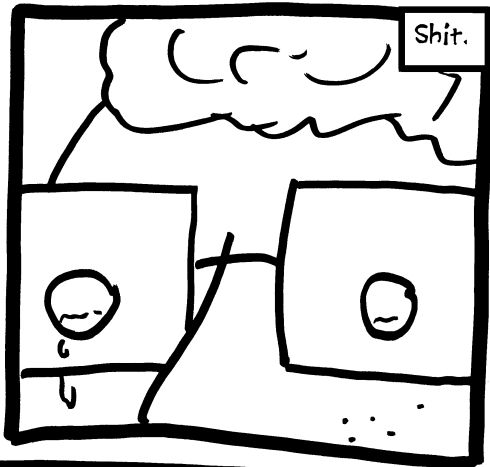
So, I've been telling everyone at work that we aren't getting married anymore.



Wait. What? What do you mean?



Shit.

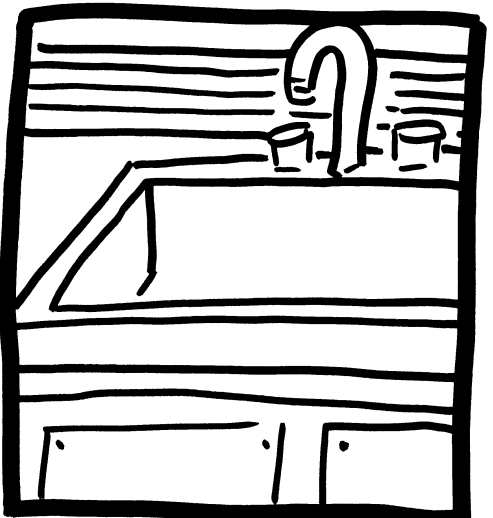


I don't think we should do this anymore. You just don't make me happy. Not in that way at least.





I did not want Taco Bell. I didn't know what I wanted. I sat there on the kitchen floor and tried to listen but the words didn't stick. I wish I could tell you what else happened but I can't remember.

A large rectangular panel containing a block of text. The text is written in a simple, hand-drawn style. The panel has a thick black border.

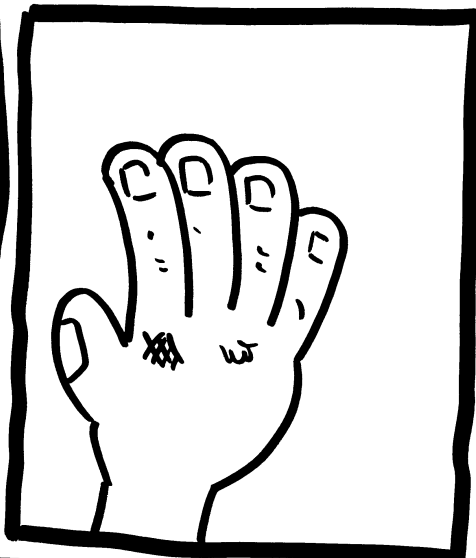
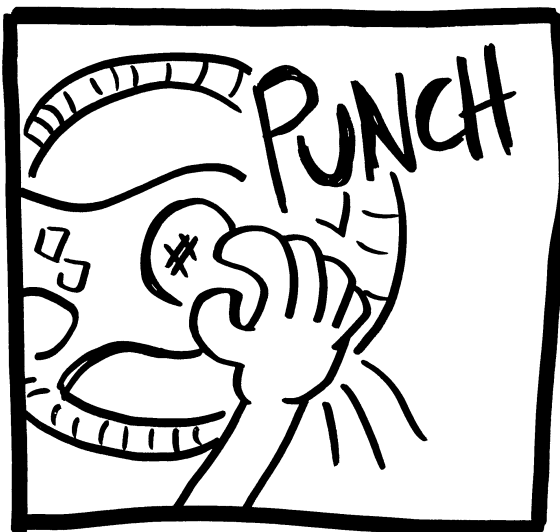


The only thing I do remember is walking into a spiderweb when I left that night.

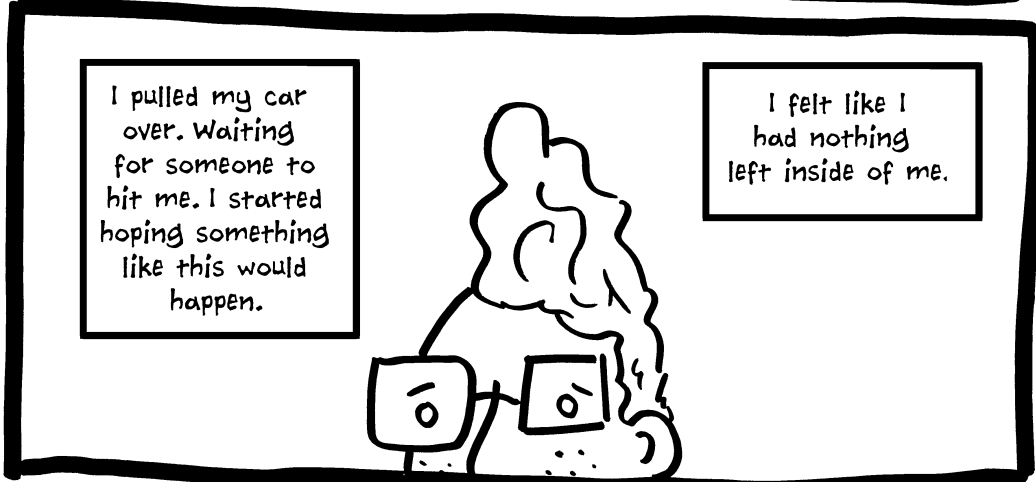


I spent my entire drive home convinced that there was a spider living inside my hair. It seems so unimportant now but it is the only thing I cling to from that night.





I punched my steering wheel. But I wanted to feel more.



I pulled my car over. Waiting for someone to hit me. I started hoping something like this would happen.

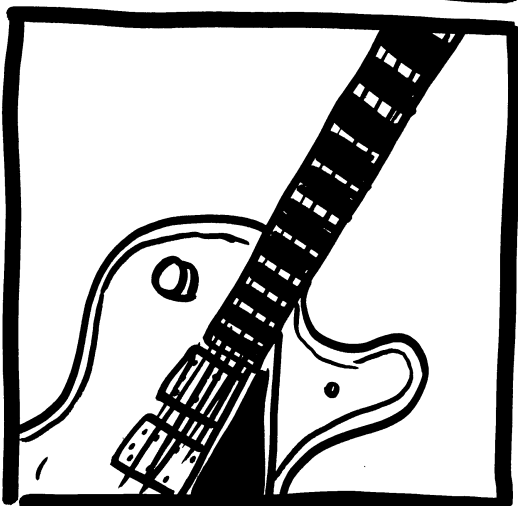
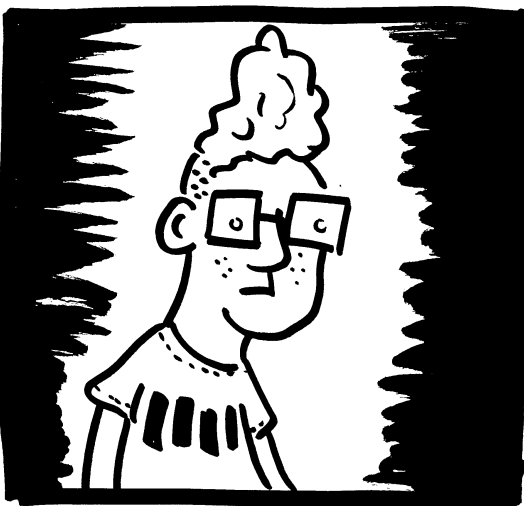
I felt like I had nothing left inside of me.

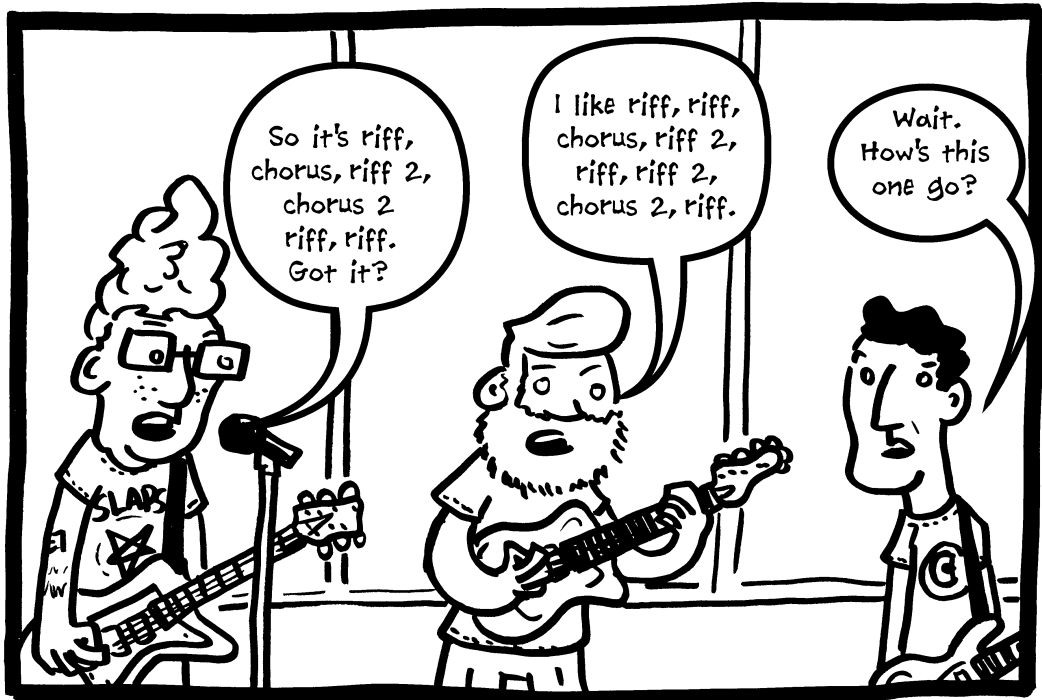


I started coming up with different ways to self-harm.

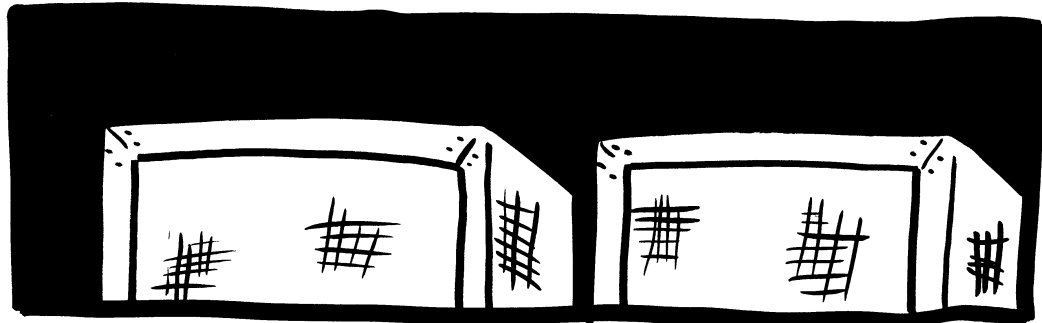


I picked at my fingers until they bled. I still didn't seek any help for my mental state. I wasn't sure if anybody could even fix me. Maybe I was meant to be broken. I didn't even want to fix it anymore. The pain became familiar to me, my comfort.

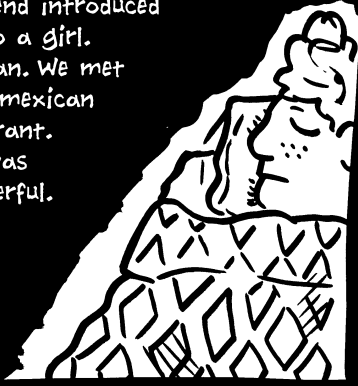




I was going through the motions of my life, but I wasn't really living it. I felt like a failure and an outsider more than ever. But then one night...



A friend introduced me to a girl, Kristan. We met at a Mexican restaurant. She was wonderful.



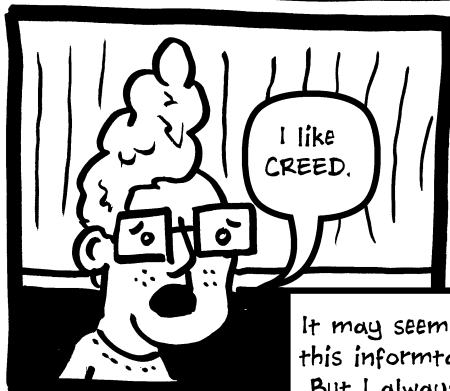
I have something to tell you...

Alright, what is it?



Oh, well I think I can live with that. I like One Direction.

I like CREED.



It may seem silly to reveal this information like I did. But I always felt insecure about liking certain music, and when I decide to let that go it felt like I was finally able to be myself.



The first time me and Kristan went out of town together was unforgettable.

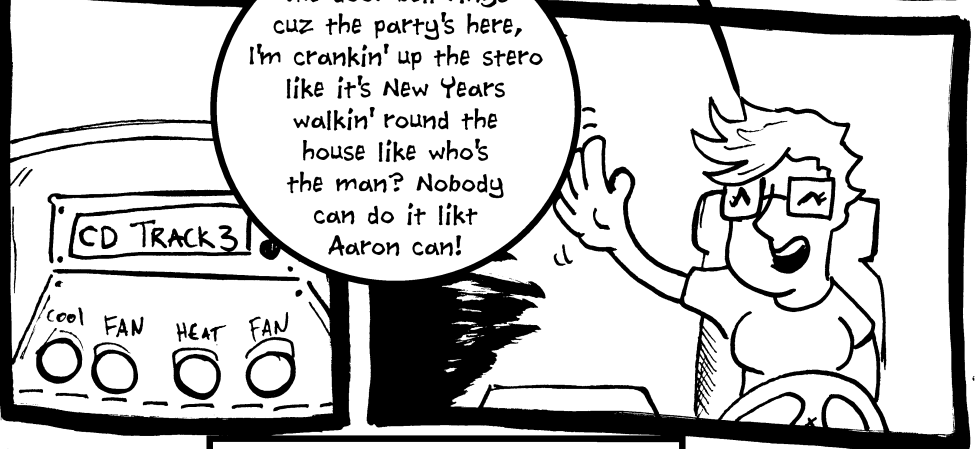


So this is an old mix CD of yours?

Yep!



The door bell rings cuz the party's here, I'm crankin' up the stereo like it's New Years walkin' round the house like who's the man? Nobody can do it likt Aaron can!



Kristan knew all the words to Aaron Carter songs and wasn't afraid to scream them! She made me feel good about myself. She was fun and exciting and allowed me to be who I wanted to be.



We really hit it off. It didn't take long for me to realize how much she meant to me.

So, I don't know how to say all this. But you're great.

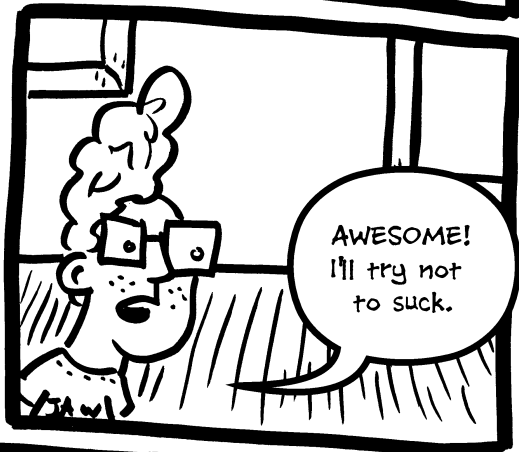
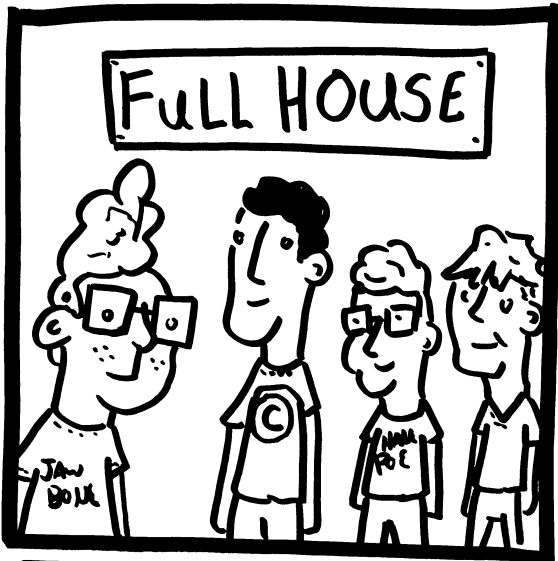
Am I?

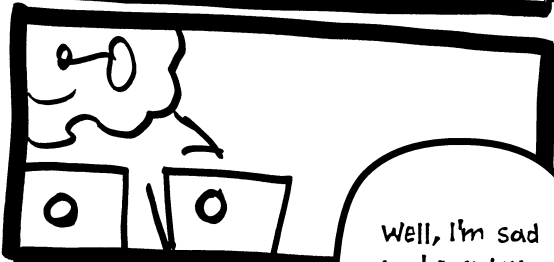
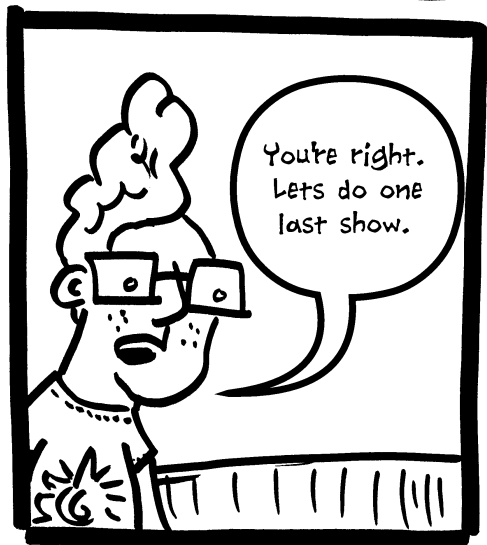
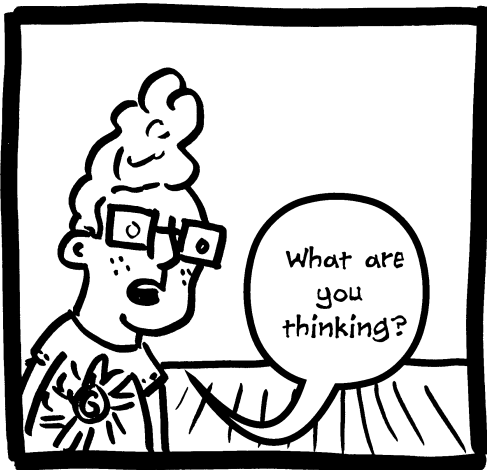
Yes, and...

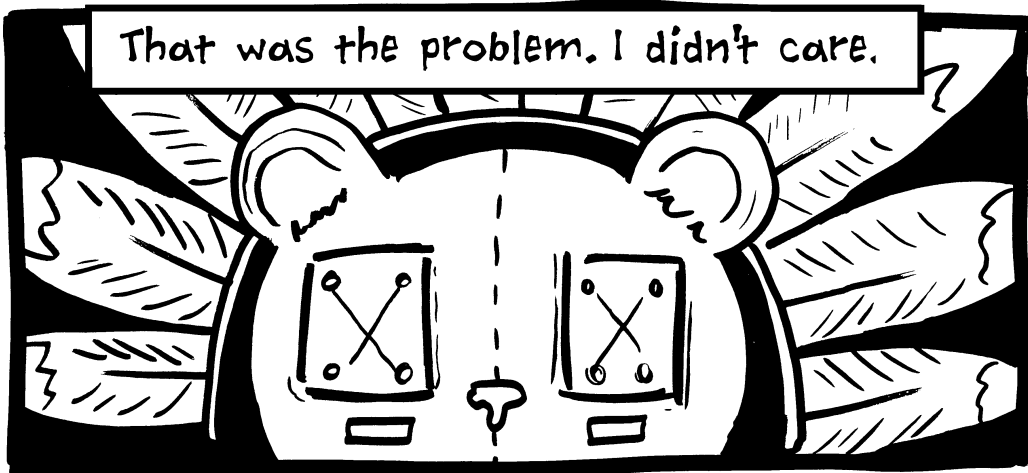
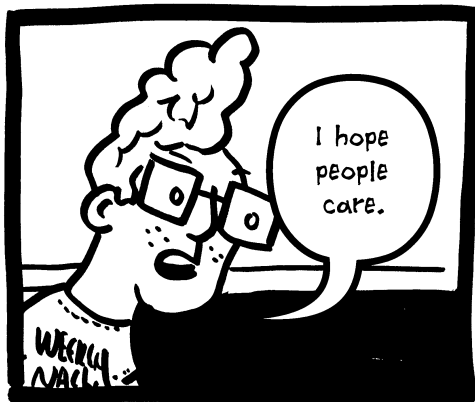
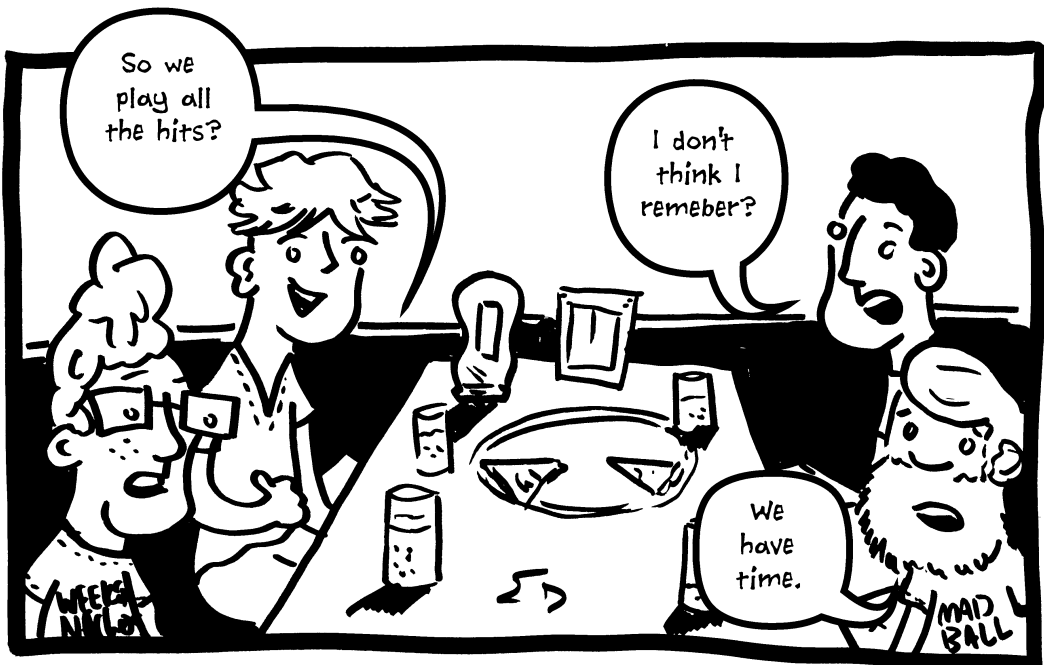
I think I love you.

Tight!
I love you too.

I couldn't believe it. Things were finally feeling better.

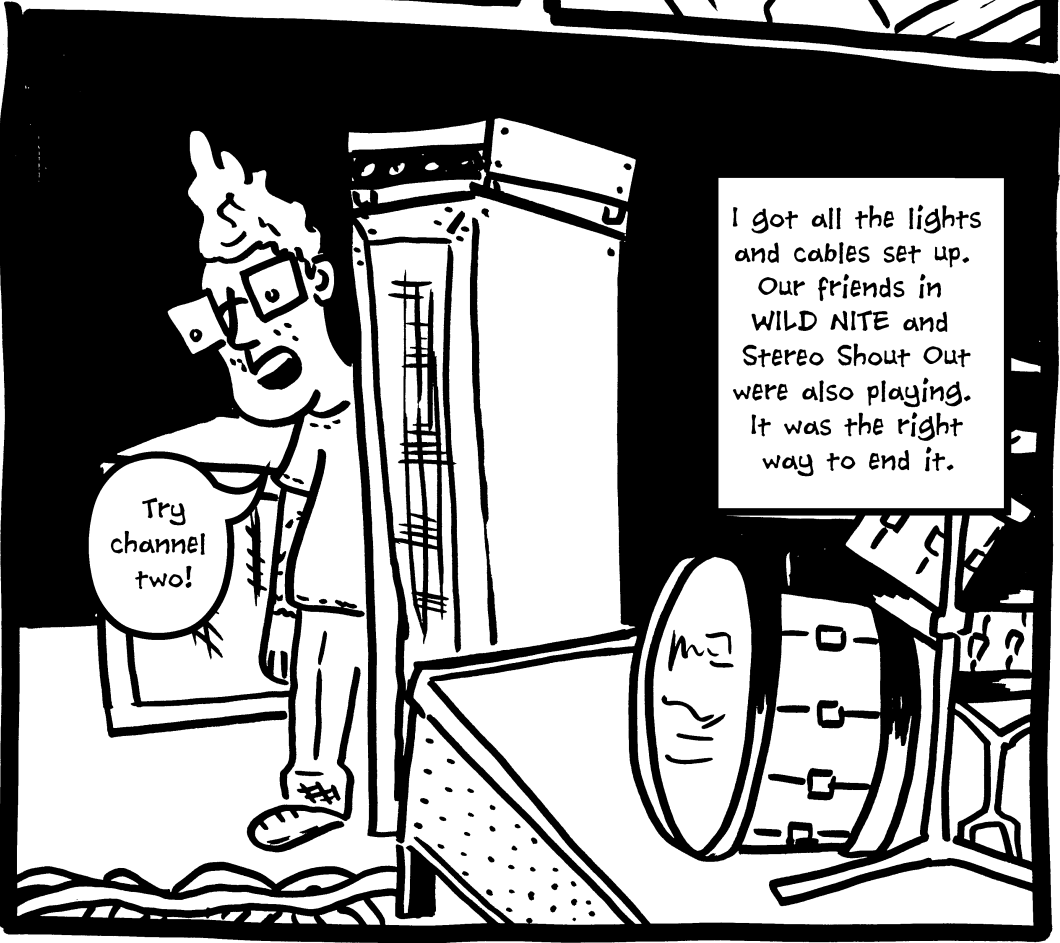
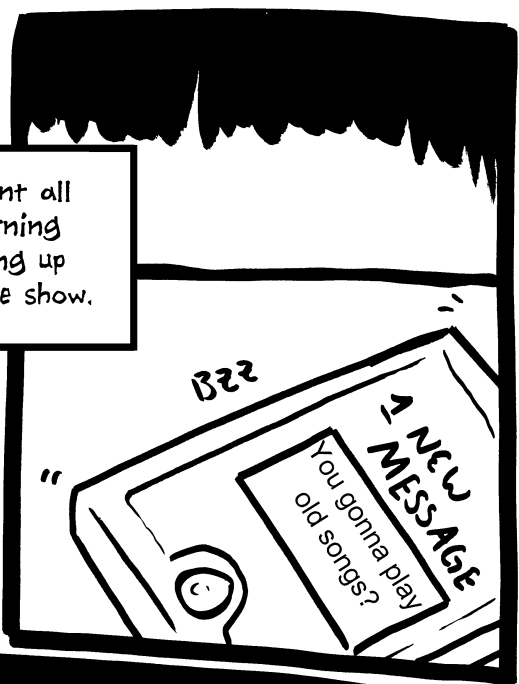








I spent all morning setting up for the show.



Try channel two!

I got all the lights and cables set up. Our friends in WILD NITE and Stereo Shout Out were also playing. It was the right way to end it.

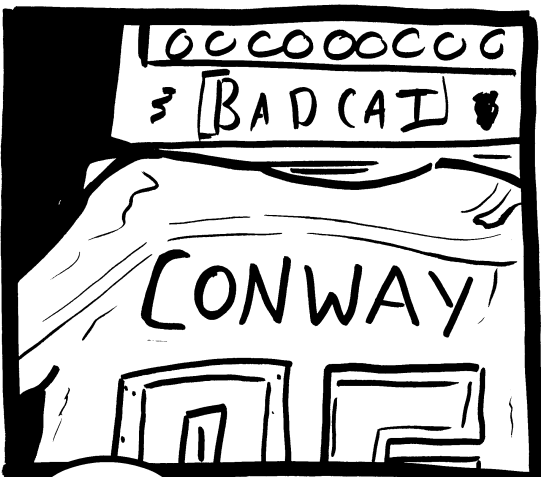
WILD NITE



Stereo Shout Out



I stayed backstage with Kristan, our friend Rosie, and her son Lane.





Don't fuckin' walk behind my amp!

THIS IS THE END

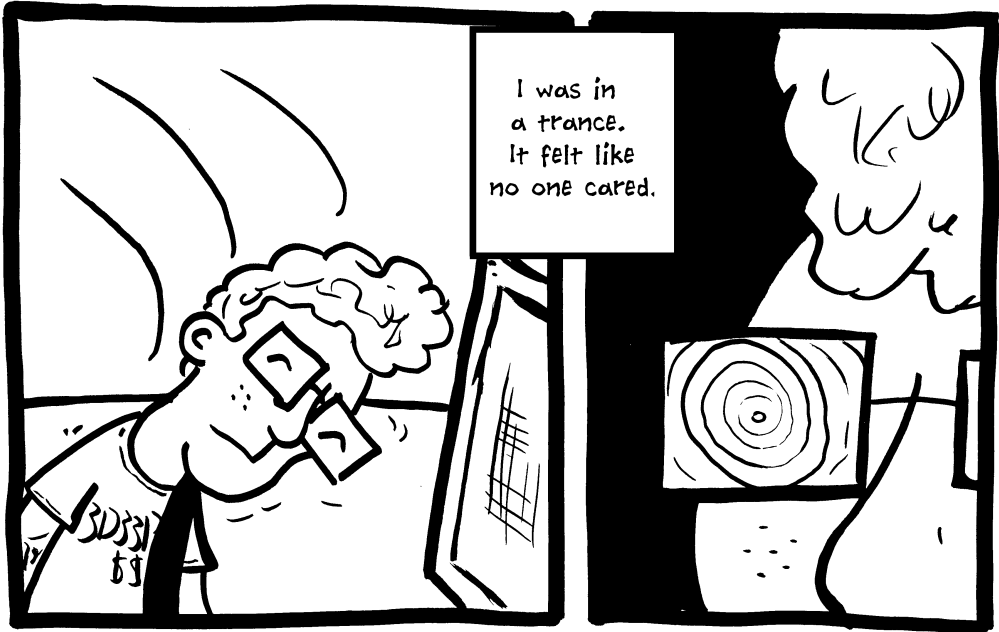
GOODS AD CAT

ONWAY

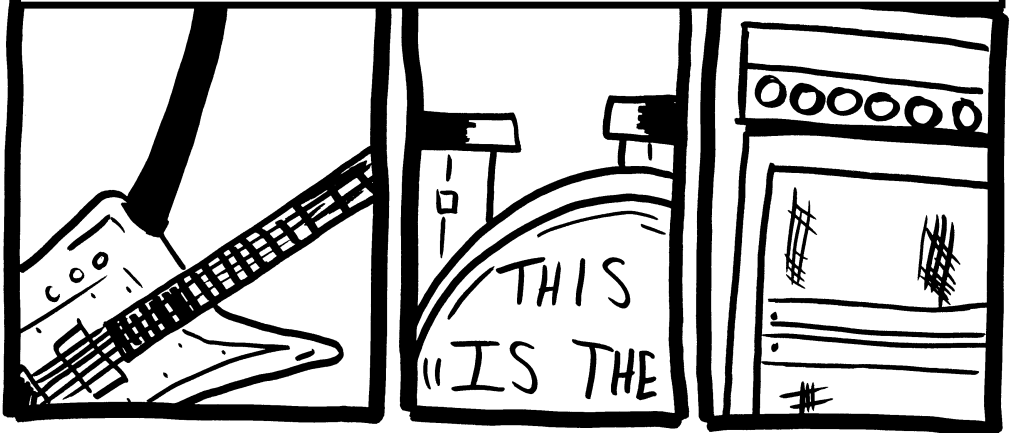
I hope they play Diabetes!

This is a Soglent Coil riff?!

Man, they sound really tired!



I should be doing this for myself, but I thought it'd be better.



Our friend Wayne gave us a eulogy.

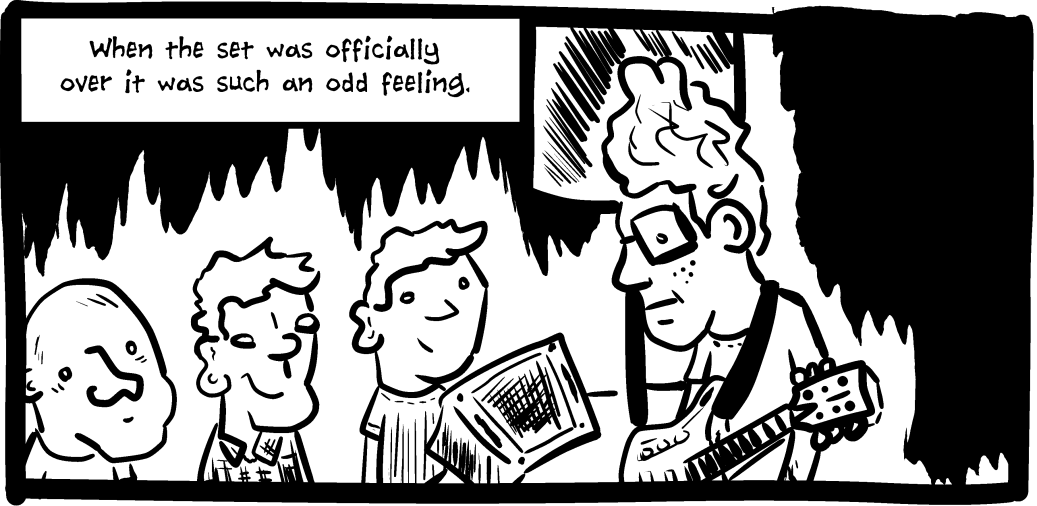
Today we mourn the deaths of our fallen friends, The Scandalmongers. When I first saw them it was at the Hockey House. I saw a drummer who was just a blur of hair and noise. A chubby red-haired kid who kept running out of breath.

Cheers fellas. And thanks.

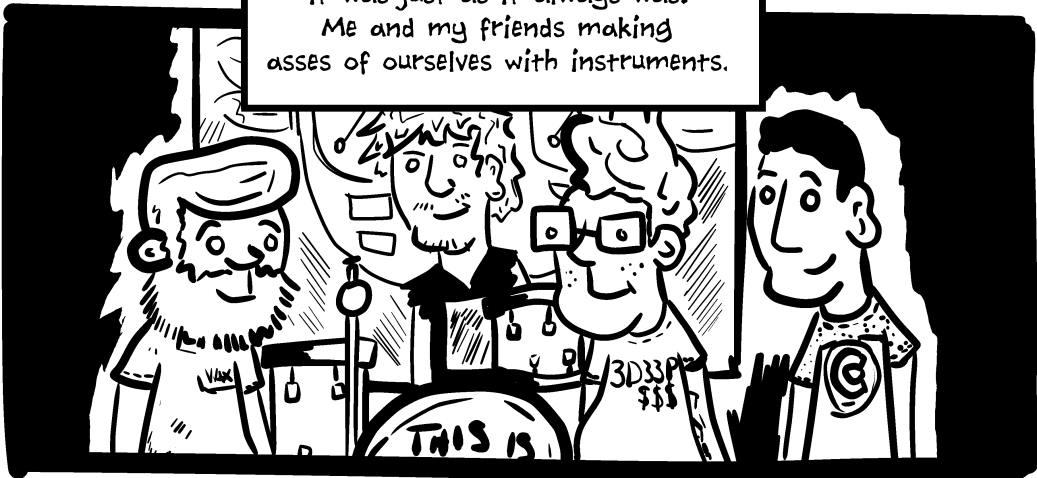
We want to thank you all for tonight, and for the last 8 years!

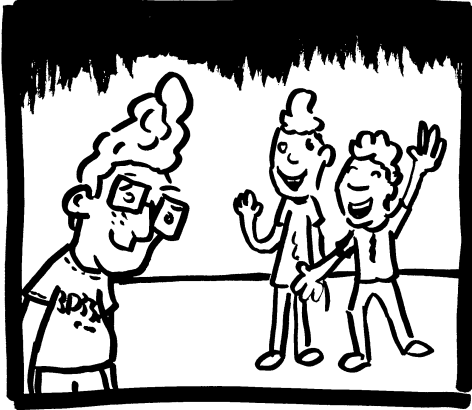
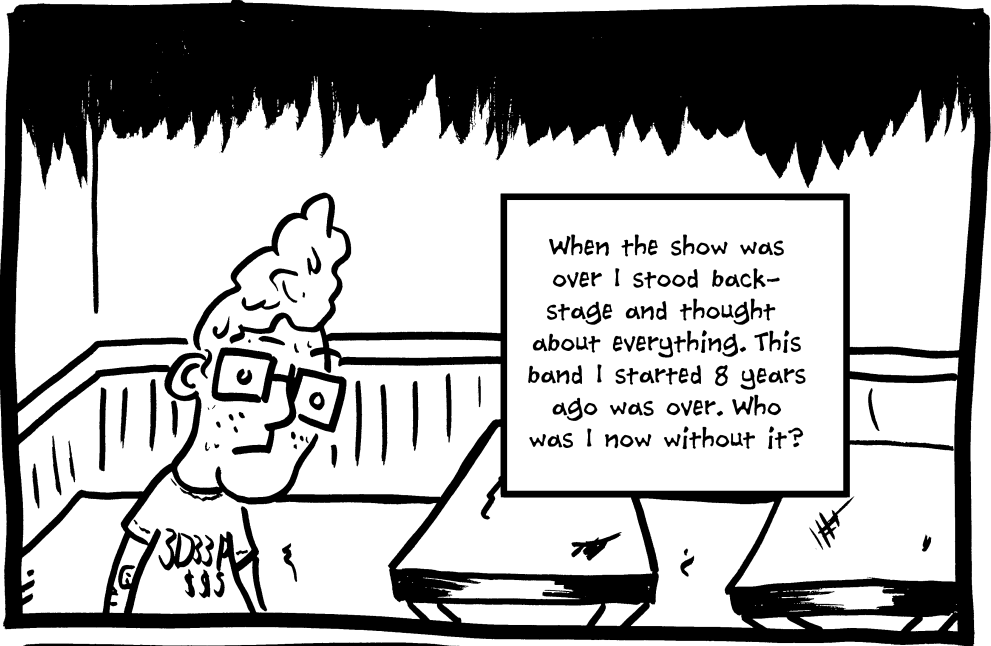
Andrew started crying when we finished the last song. I was surprised. I had never seen him do that. It felt like maybe this band was never really just about me.

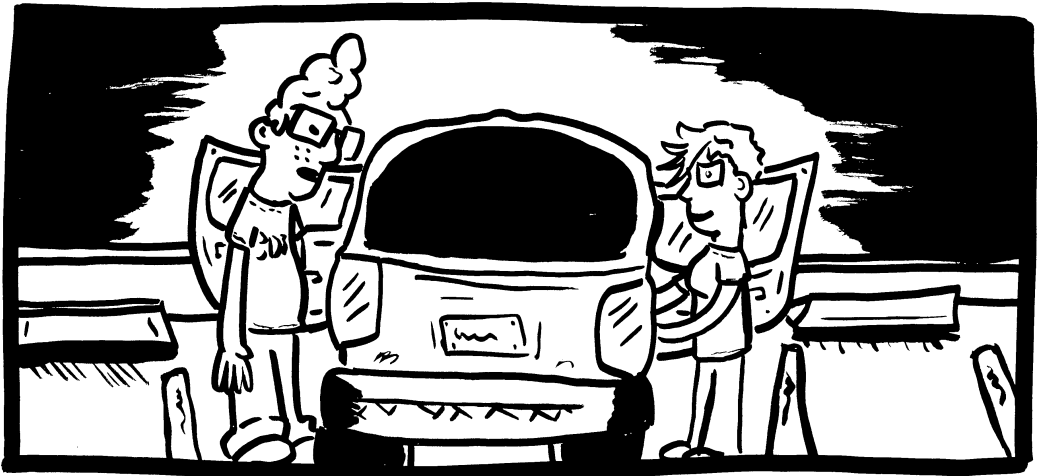
When the set was officially over it was such an odd feeling.



I felt like it would be this big amazing thing, but instead it was just as it always was. Me and my friends making asses of ourselves with instruments.







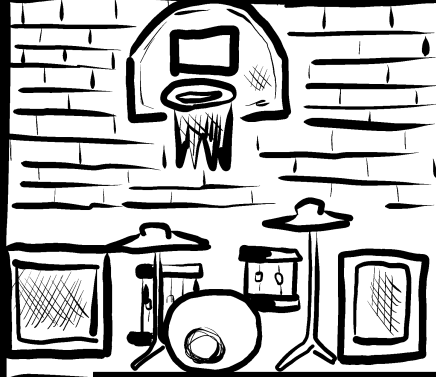


Fugazi is one of the most influential bands of all time. Not only did they push music forward, but they created a culture of music. It wasn't about CDs or merch. It was about people and the music they make.

FUGAZI



Alright, let's just have fun. Don't hurt each other!



Fugazi would play anywhere. Basements, basketball gyms, you name it! They also never denied their fans anything. They even recorded all their shows and released them online for free!

JULY 1
JULY 2
JULY 3
JULY 4

AUG - 18th

AUG 19th

AUG 20

SEP - 22

SEP 23

SEP 24

They founded their own label to release their music on.

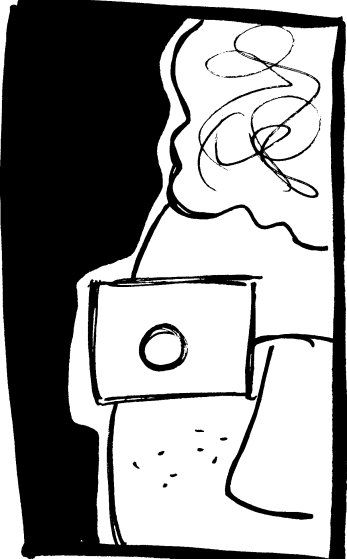
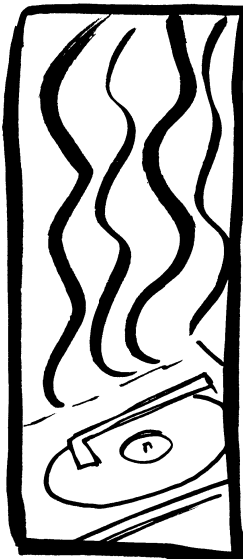
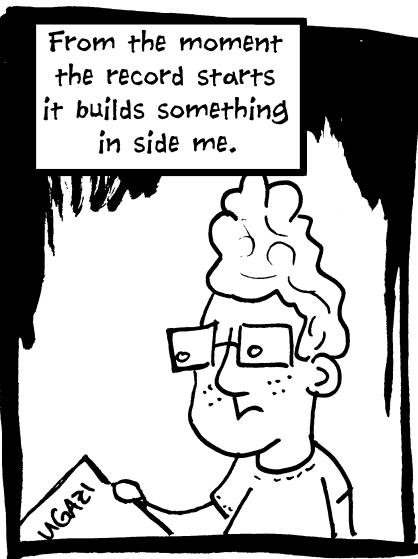


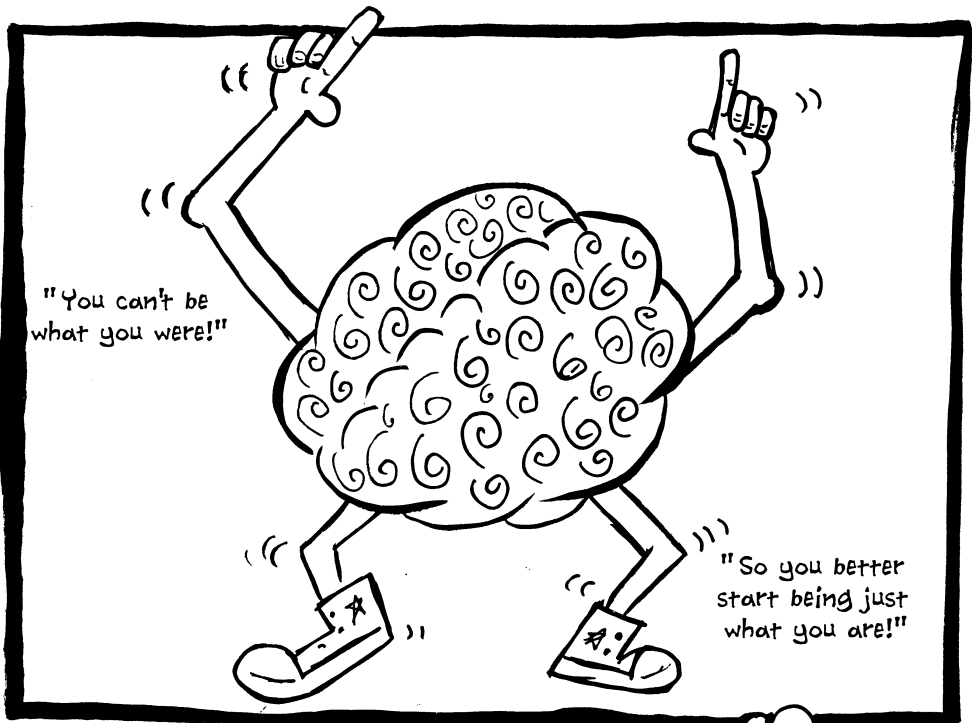
Fugazi believed in creating and nurturing a community of musicians and fans. After the end of ground breaking punk band, Minor Threat, Ian MacKaye felt like violence was taking over the punk world.

It wasn't until I read that Joe Strummer called Fugazi, "The only band that exemplified punk's spirit," that I really gave them a listen.



From the moment the record starts it builds something in side me.





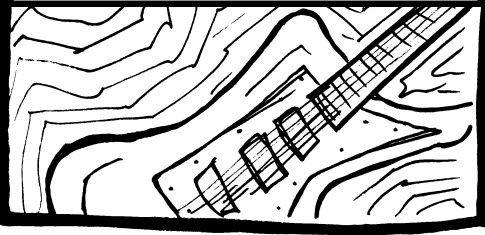
This is my brain on Fugazi. Something changes for me when their music comes on. It helped me understand that change is okay. Moving on is okay.



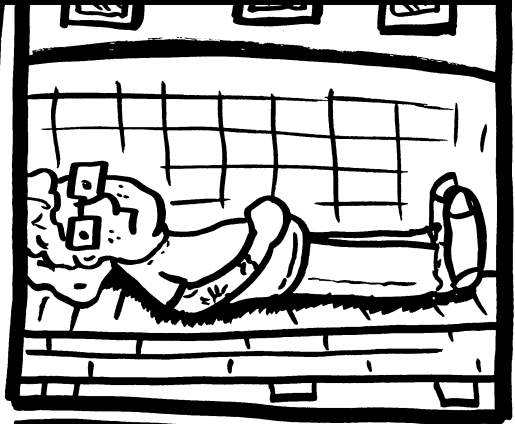
Fugazi's music speaks to me in places I didn't know I had ears.

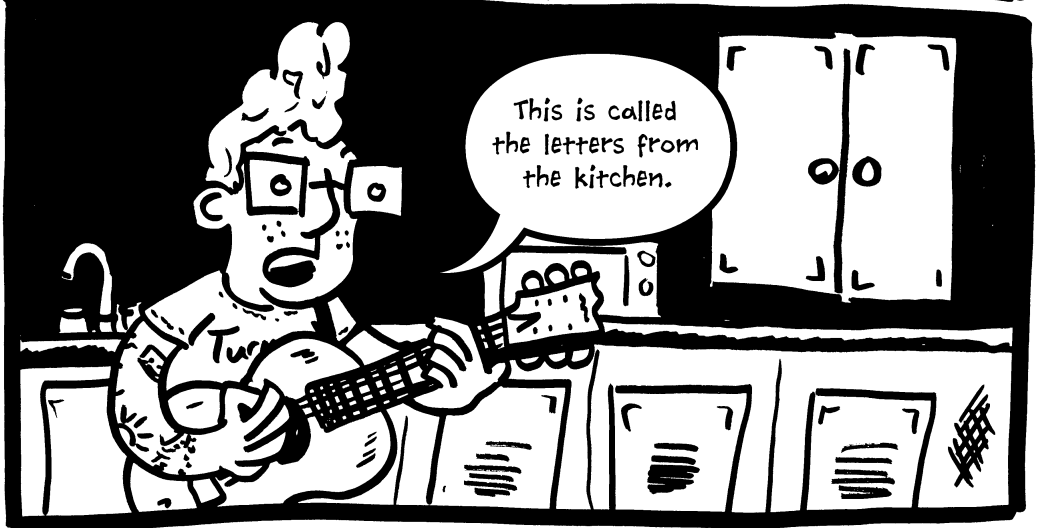
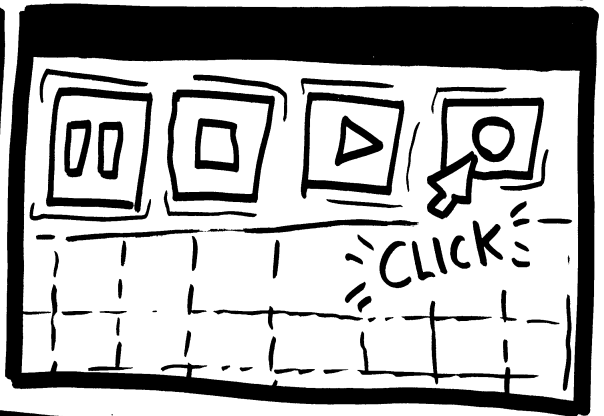
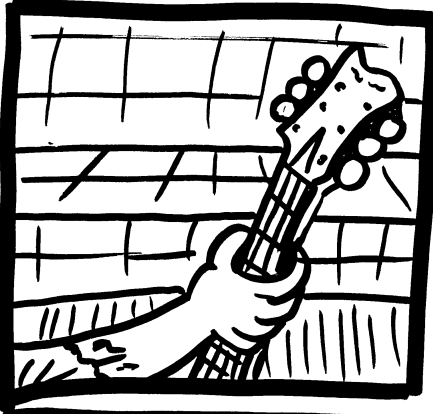
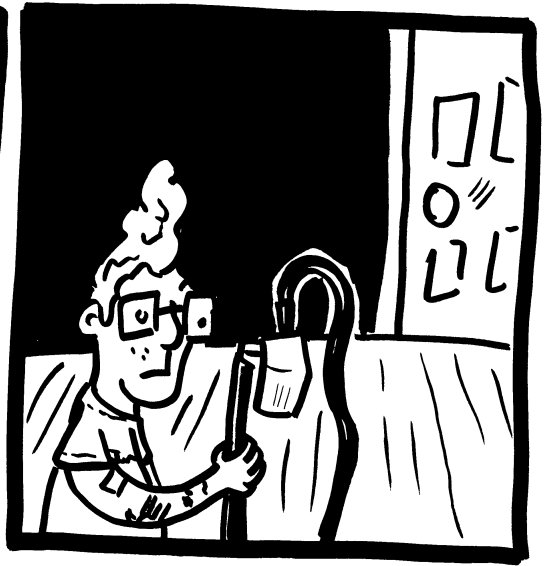
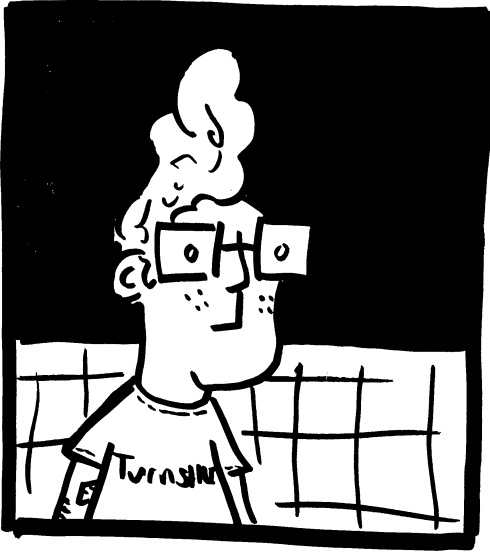


The beauty of Fugazi was in their live shows. It was less about singing to an audience and more about singing together.



I moved into an apartment. It was smelly and dirty. But it was still mine.

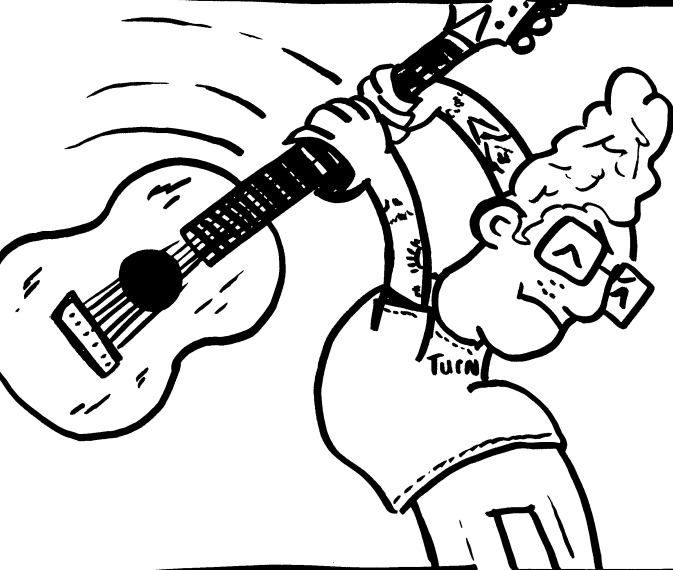
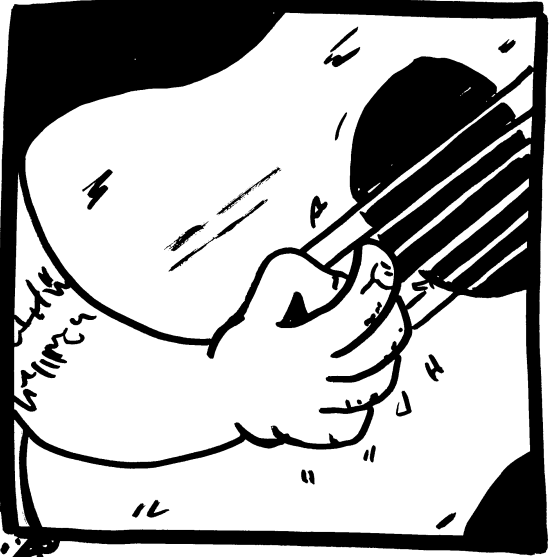




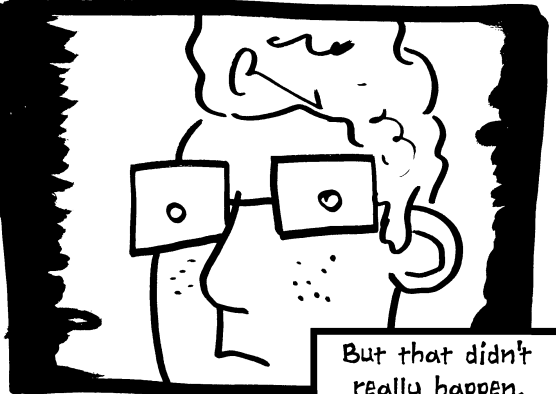
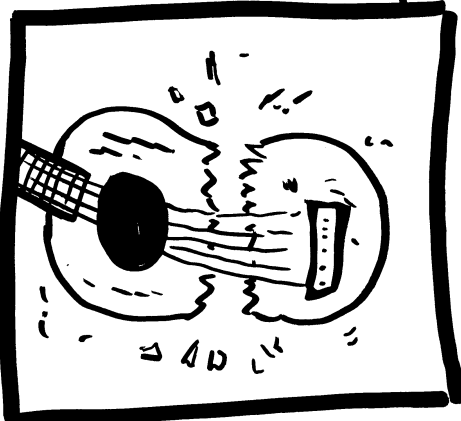
I started recording myself playing my songs a few nights a week. I kept it like my diary.

I feel like an unsharpened pencil laying on the floor of a public bathroom, and I know no matter how hard I try I won't ever convince myself that all this piss is rain. But I love my pain, I love the way it hits my lips. I love it more around my hips, I love it the best when I barely cath a glimpse.

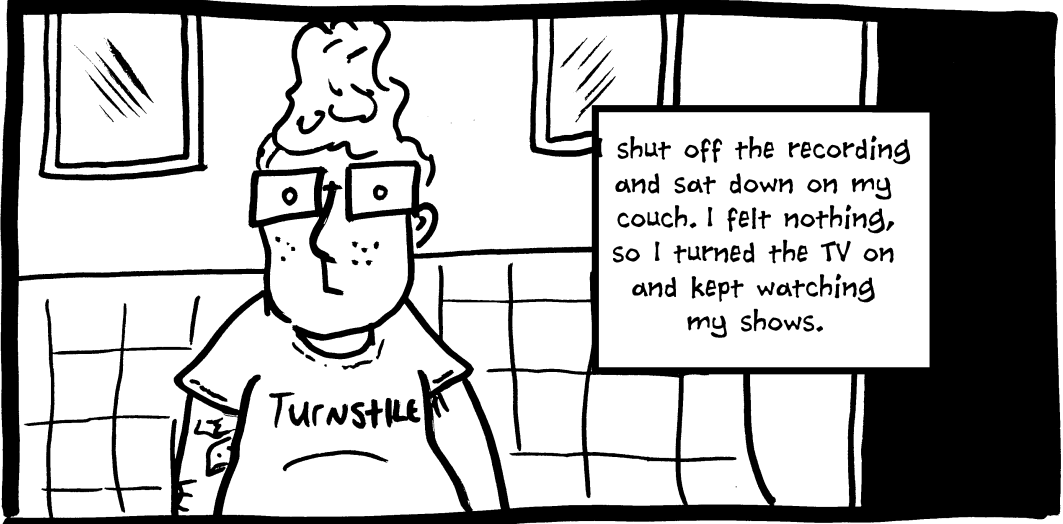
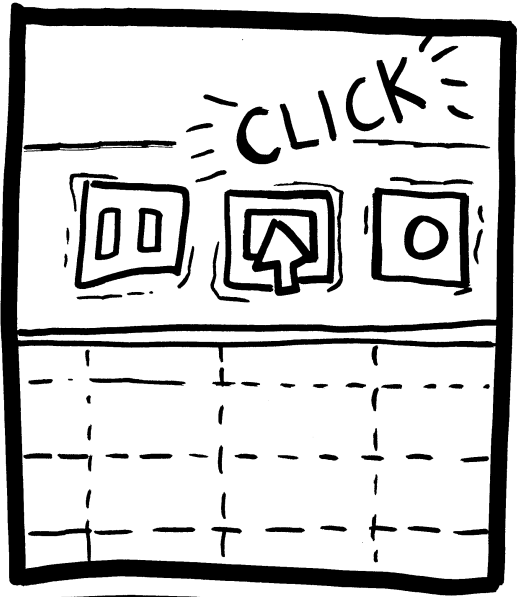
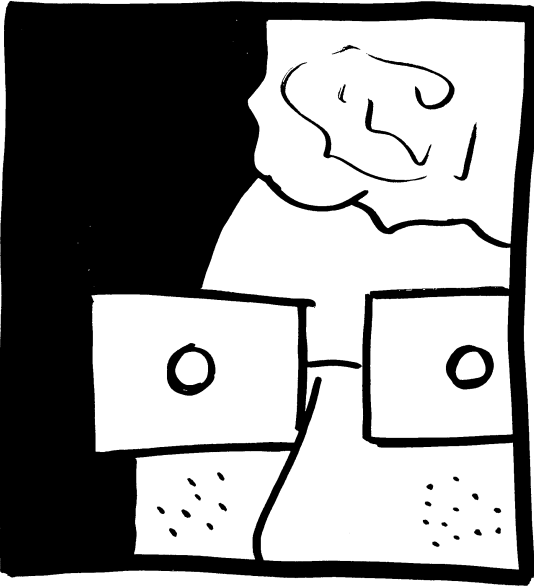




I remember feeling so helpless in that time. I hated the song. I hated myself, and I just wanted everything to stop. My mental health was beginning to take over my thoughts. The only thing I wanted to do was smash the feelings out of my head.



But that didn't really happen.



shut off the recording and sat down on my couch. I felt nothing, so I turned the TV on and kept watching my shows.



Part 4



A few days later.

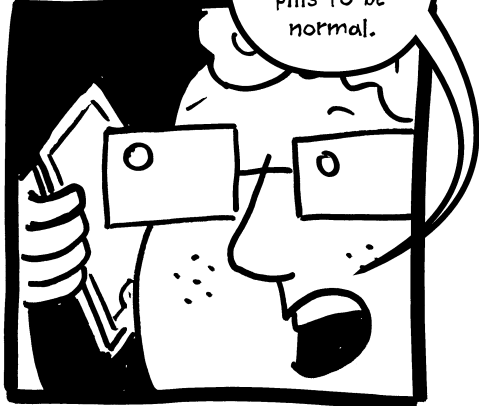
Talking to Kristan.

I just feel really weak and fucked up. Like I can't bring myself to do anything.

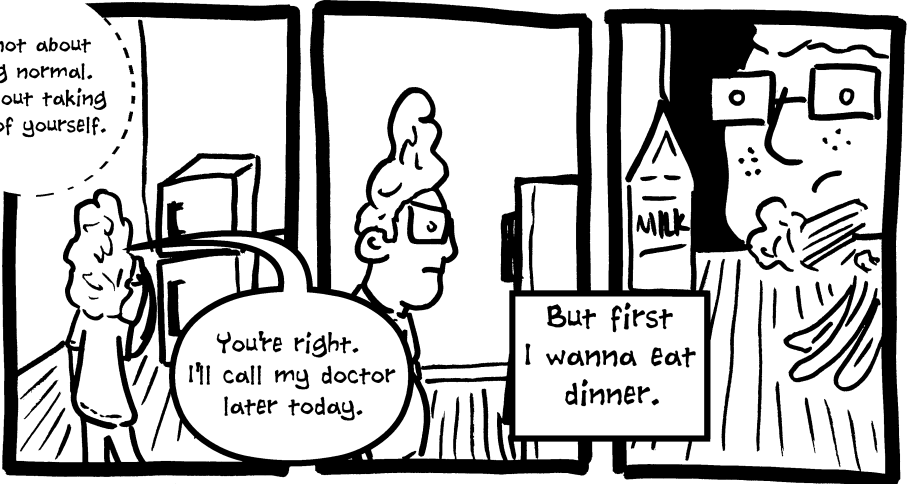
I don't know how I feel about taking pills to be normal.



Maybe you need help? Have you talked to your doctor?

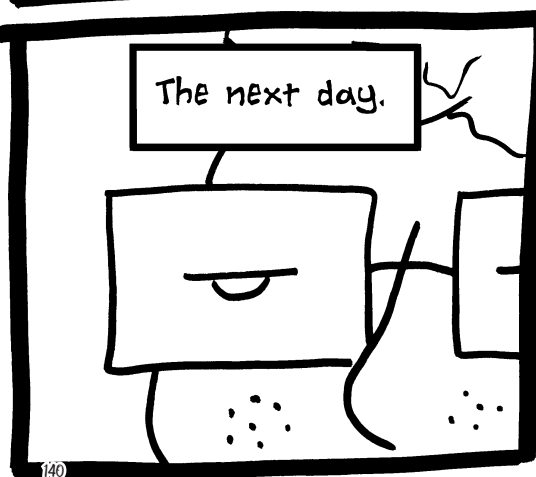
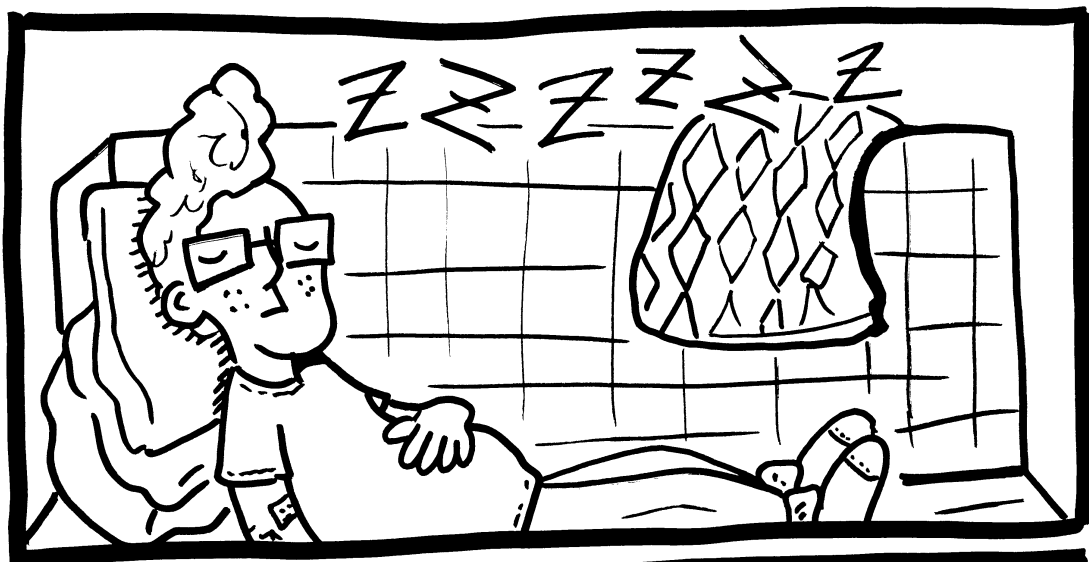
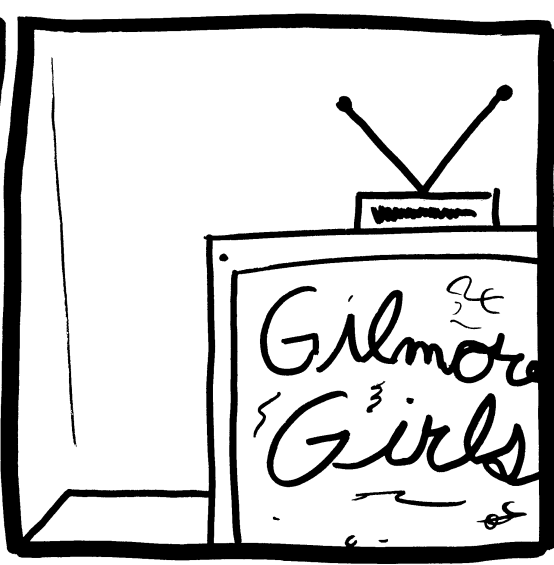


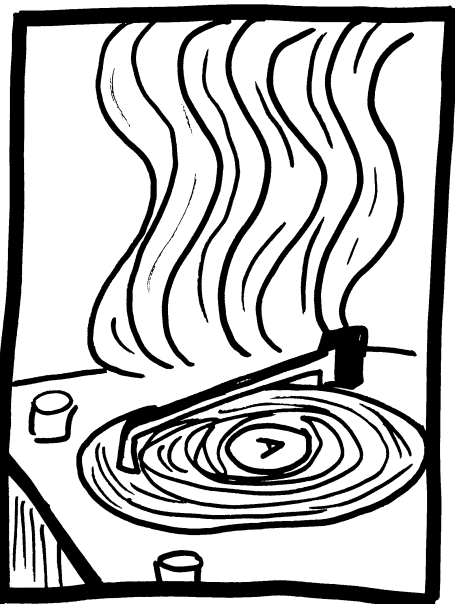
It's not about being normal. It's about taking care of yourself.



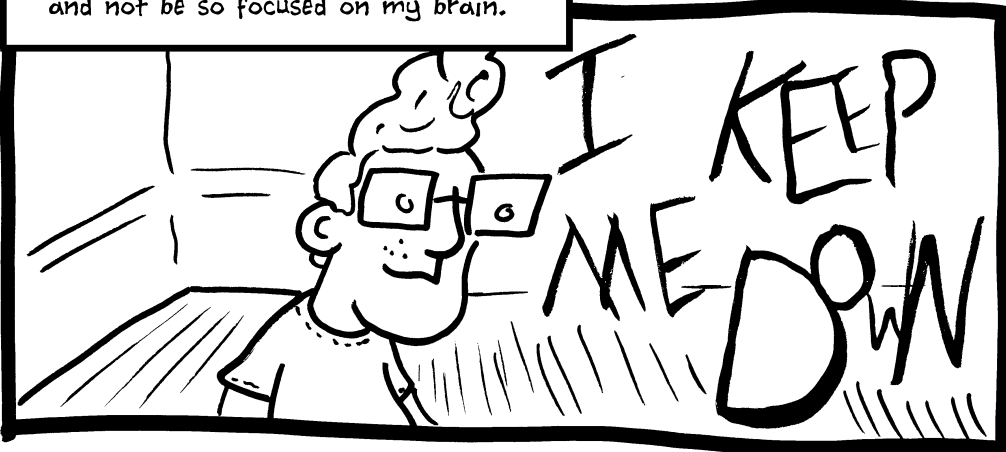
You're right. I'll call my doctor later today.

But first I wanna eat dinner.



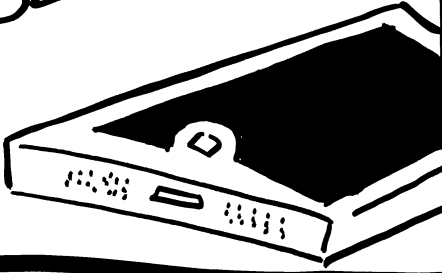


Turnstile's record Non-Stop Feeling was something I was listening to a lot during this time. It was nice to let the riffs and music take over and not be so focused on my brain.



Kristan lives about 45 minutes away, so we talk a lot on the phone.

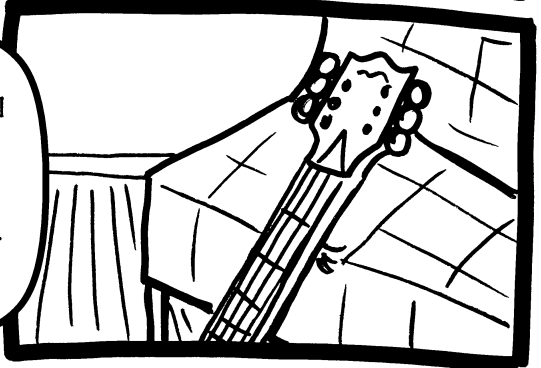
Bzz
Bzz



Hey Babe!
Oh I'm just
killing time
before the
show.



Yeah... I'll
get there
around 4.
We can
hang out
there!

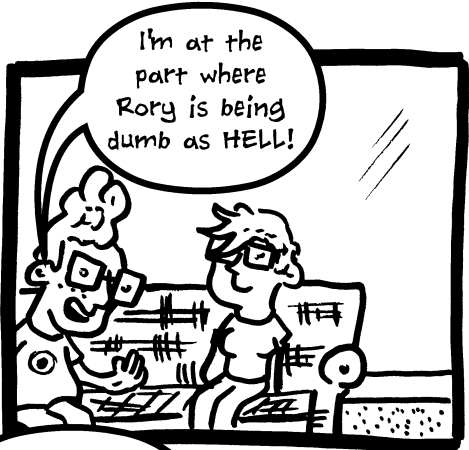


Alright!
See you
then. Love
you!

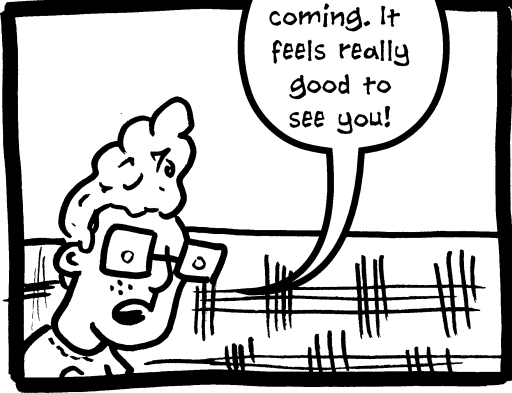




Later at the show.



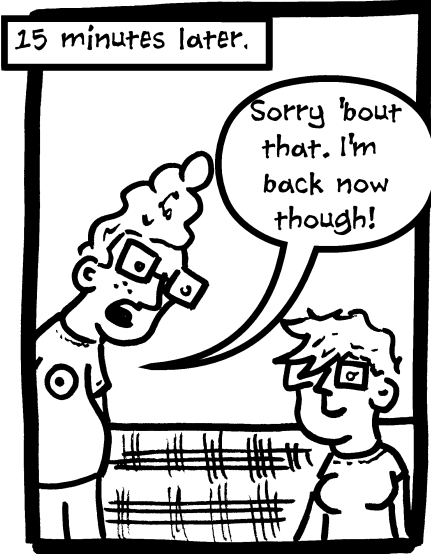
I'm at the part where Rory is being dumb as HELL!



Thanks for coming. It feels really good to see you!

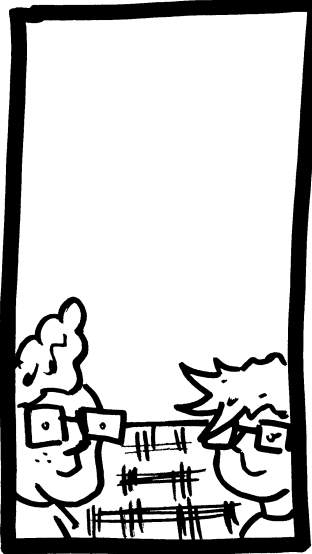


Hey Reid, can you help me with my amp?

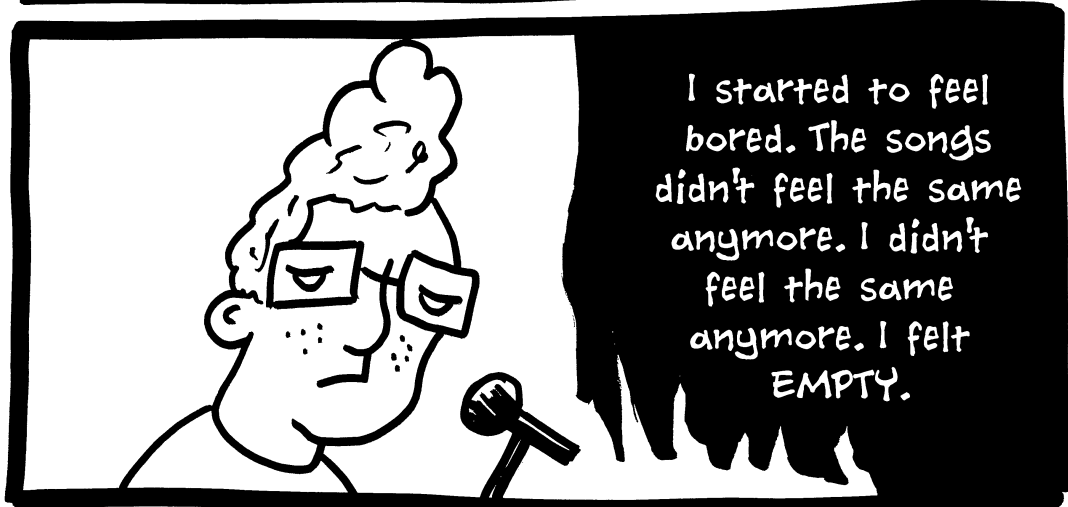
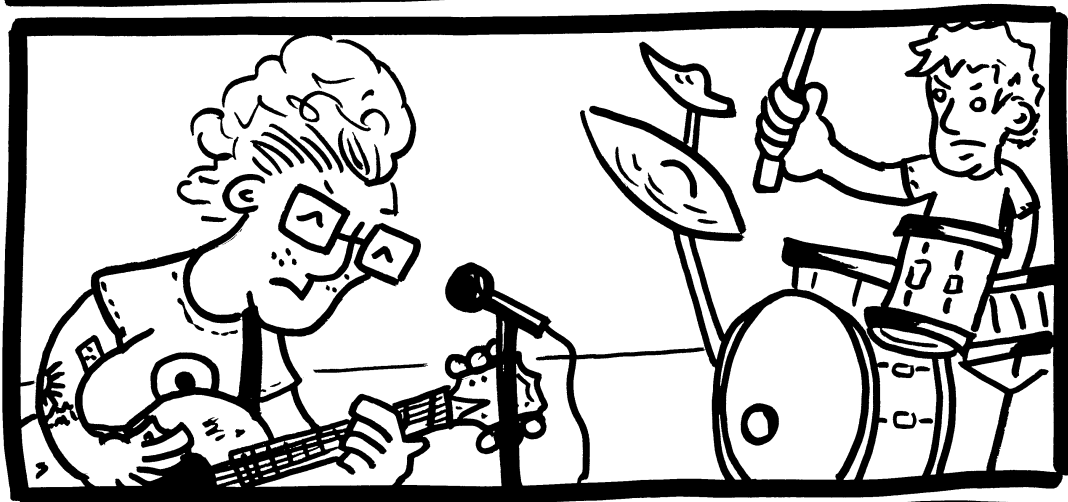
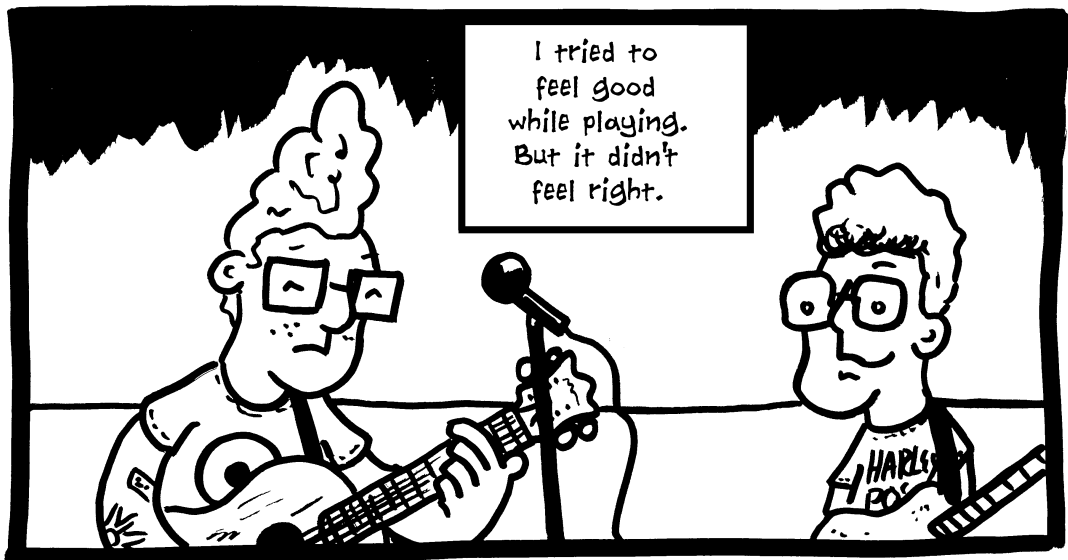


15 minutes later.

Sorry 'bout that. I'm back now though!



REID! It's on fire! HELP!!!

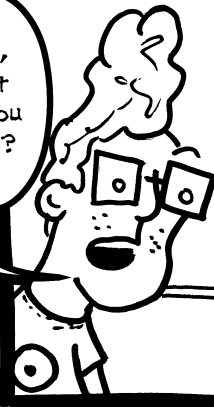


After

Well, what did you think?

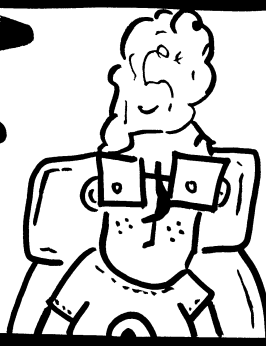
You guys played great. I just wish we could've been together more.

It just felt like I came to see you and I didn't get to see you.



It was just hard since we don't see each other often.

When I listened to Kristan tell me this it felt awful.



She was the only person there I wanted to make happy. And I let her down. I needed to take time off and focus on myself and my relationship.

So I did the normal thing anyone does when they feel like they are doing too much in their life...

I joined another band.

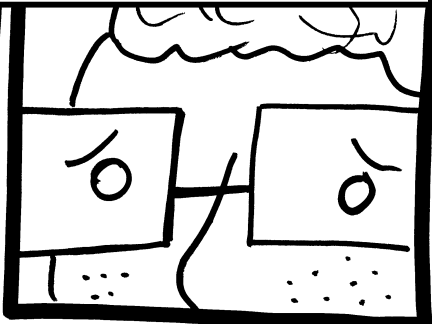
Quin was a band that I had known for a while. They asked me to join and they were super nice people.

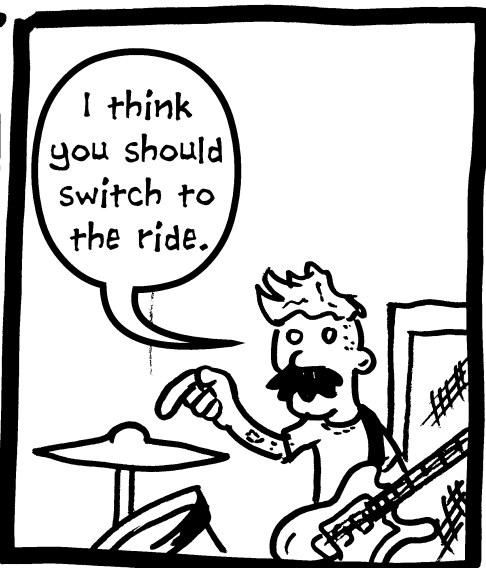
I was still nervous about the band. My brain was overloaded and I kept adding more and more...

PRACTICE.



I was trying so hard to keep up.





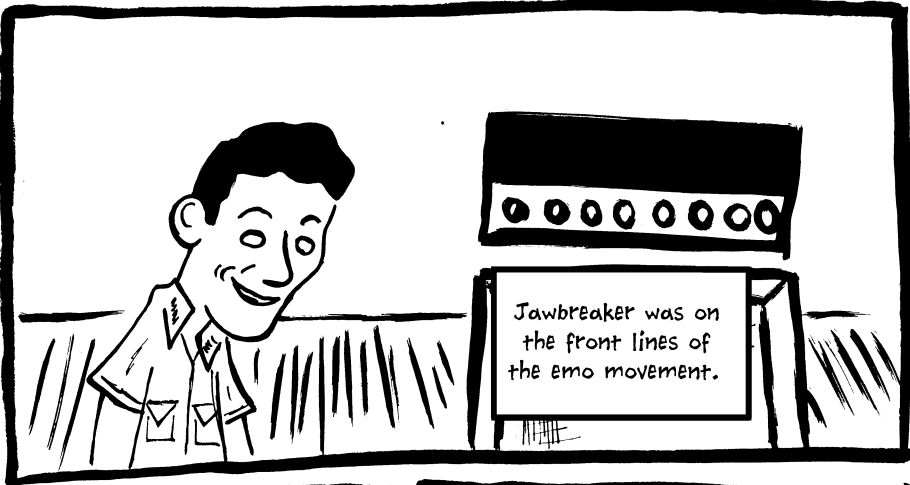
JAWBREAKER

Jawbreaker is considered to be one of the most influential acts of the EMO movement. The lead singer, Blake Schwarzenbach often wrote things right out of his own journal.

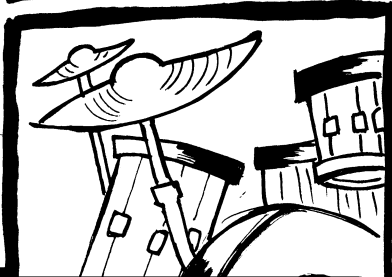


My favorite song of theirs is "Kiss the Bottle."

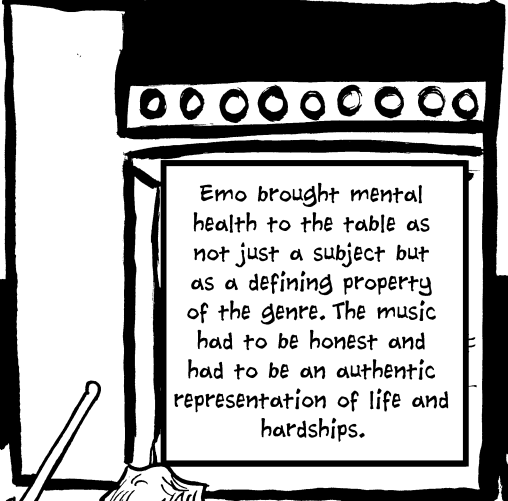




Jawbreaker was on the front lines of the emo movement.

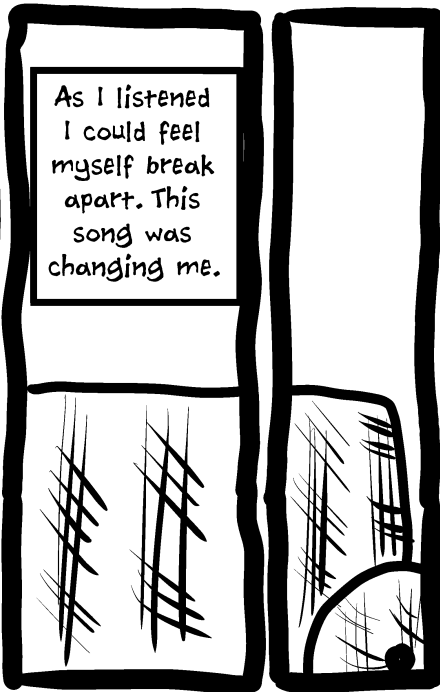
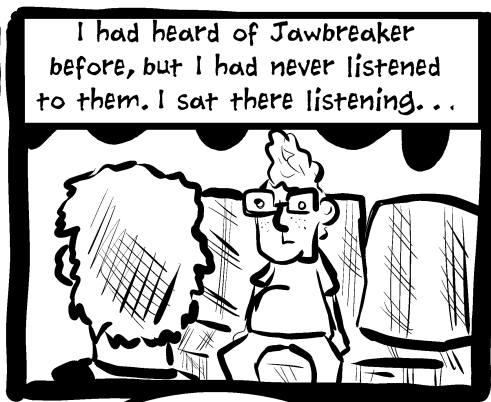


Blake, Chris, and Aaron broke up the band multiple times during their careers. They had a hard time establishing their identity inside punk rock. Nobody really knew what emo was at that time, or how to react to thoughts of anxiety or depression.

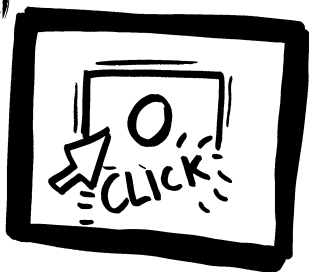
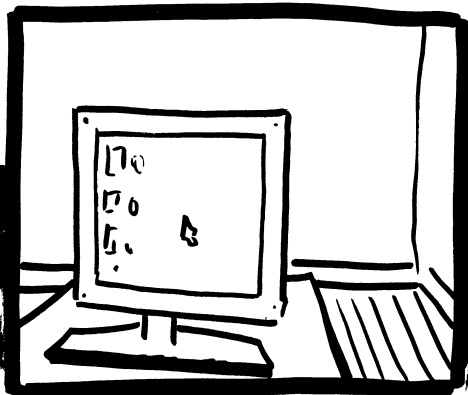


Emo brought mental health to the table as not just a subject but as a defining property of the genre. The music had to be honest and had to be an authentic representation of life and hardships.





Later. At my apartment.



I played my favorite Jawbreaker song.

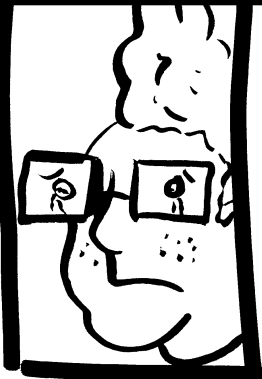
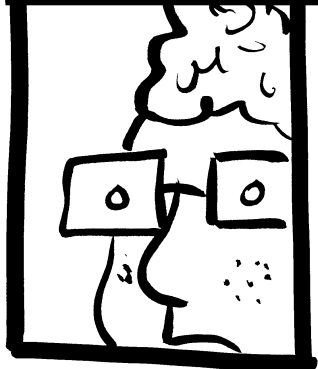


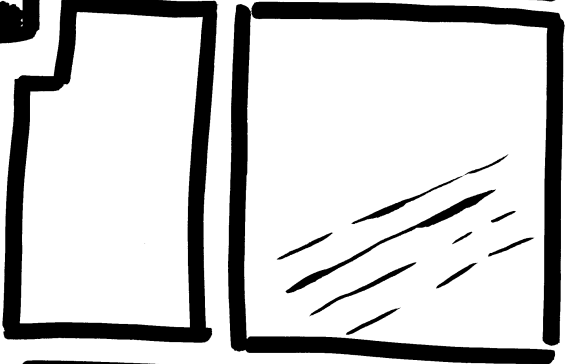
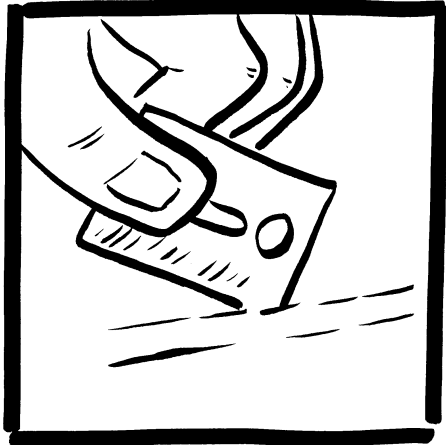
It gets lonliest at night, down by the liquor store, beneath the neon sky...





I had sung that line a million times, but for some reason this time it really hit me hard. Can I make it out of this mess I'm in?

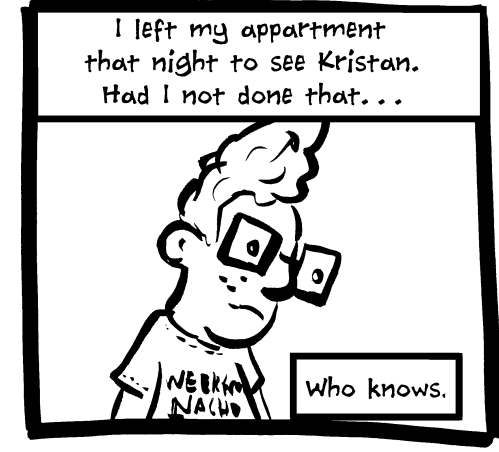




You can't do this.
You can't fit in
with the weirdos.
You were only
good for playing
in bands and now
you can't even do
that right.

YOU FAILED.

A large black and white panel. On the right, a man's face is shown in profile, looking towards the left. In the center, a small screen displays a man with glasses and a mustache, similar to the character in the other panels. Below the screen, the words "YOU FAILED." are written in large, bold, capital letters.



Part 5

LIFE OF AGONY

LIFE OF AGONY aren't really a hardcore band, but they were able to be accepted by both camps, hardcore and metal.

Their first album is a concept album about a teenager going through some shit and ends up killing himself.

Lead singer, Mina Caputo, came out as transgender in 2011. She has stated that she never felt like who she was supposed to be. Their music often has themes of finding your true identity.

There are also some sweet ass breakdowns.

When I first heard
Life of Agony I
was blown away.
The sheer power of
the band was amazing



The breakdowns were
heavy and so were the
lyrics. They talked about
dark things and made me
feel like less of a freak
in my head.



Growing up I had been
called every name you
could think of. When I
read the things said
about Mina, it hit home.

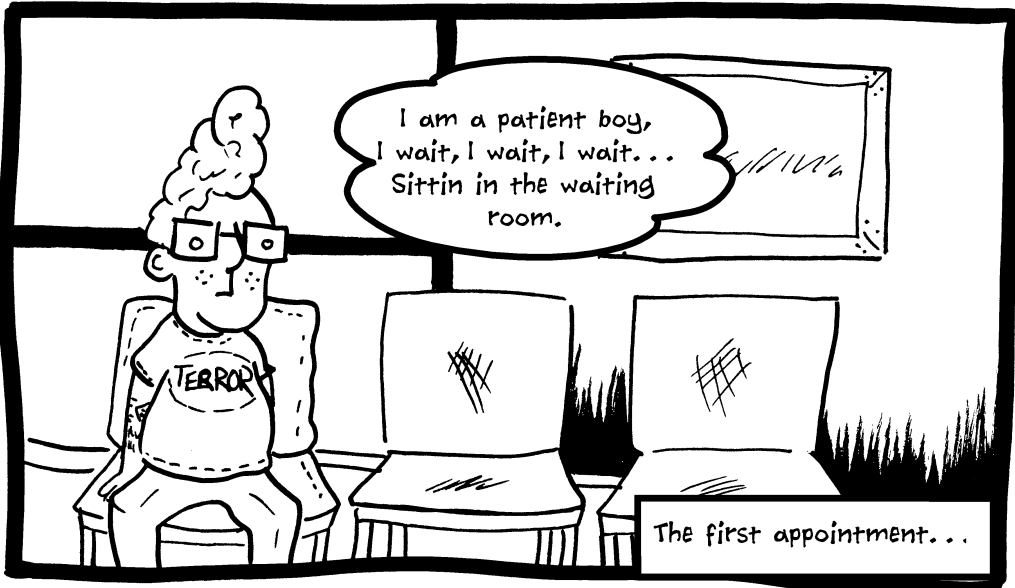
But online when
Mina came out as
trans the comments
were pretty awful

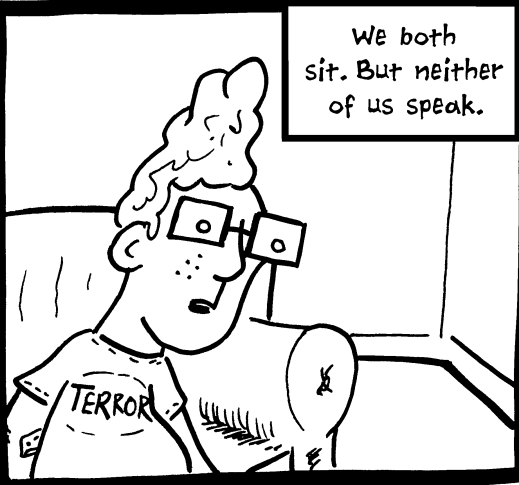


Mina was just being who she
really was. And people were
tearing her down for it.


River Runs Red is an album
that ruined my perception
of what a great heavy album
could be. And whenever I think
I have listened to enough and
I'm ready to move on, it
just keeps pulling me back in.









We both sit. But neither of us speak.




Okay, so today is really just a get to know you thing.




I'm going to ask you some questions about your family. Okay?



Still scared to speak.



Later I am still quiet. I wasn't sure what to say.

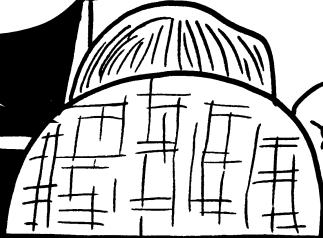


What are your hobbies?

Later.

Reid,
it sounds
like you
have severe
depression.

No Shit.



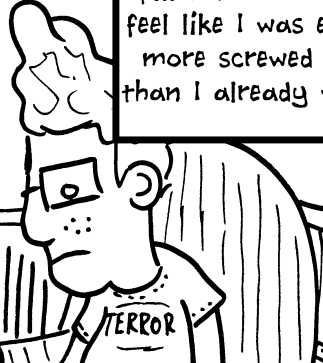
What do
you think
I should
do?



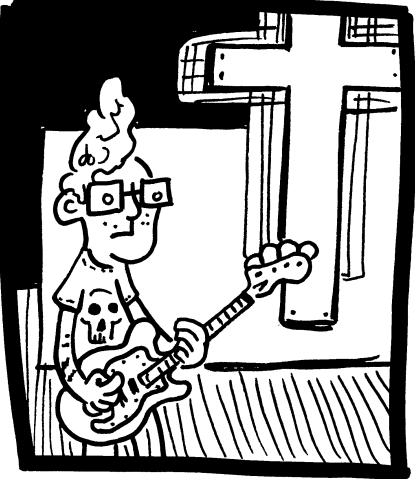
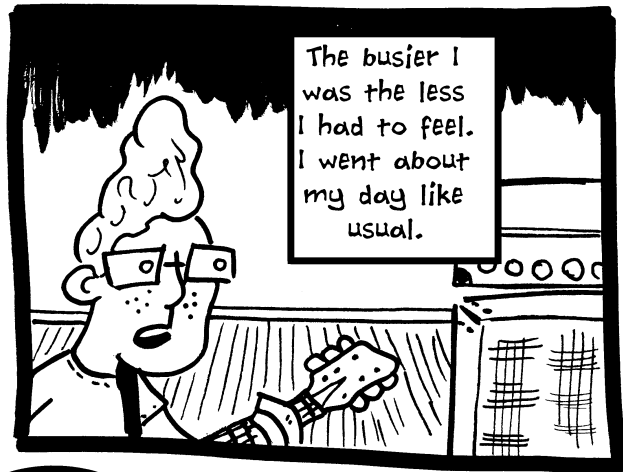
Well, I think
we should
keep meeting.
And we
can work
together.

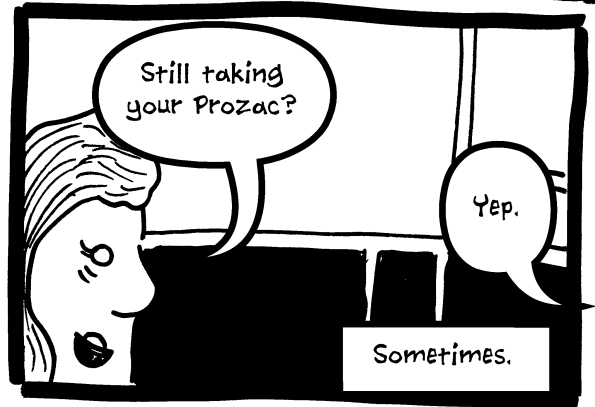
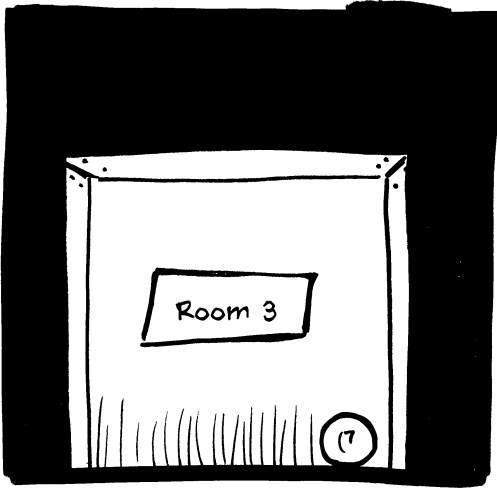


I'll set
you up
with a nurse
and we will
see where
we are,
medication
wise.



I didn't like the
idea of taking
pills. It made me
feel like I was even
more screwed up
than I already was.

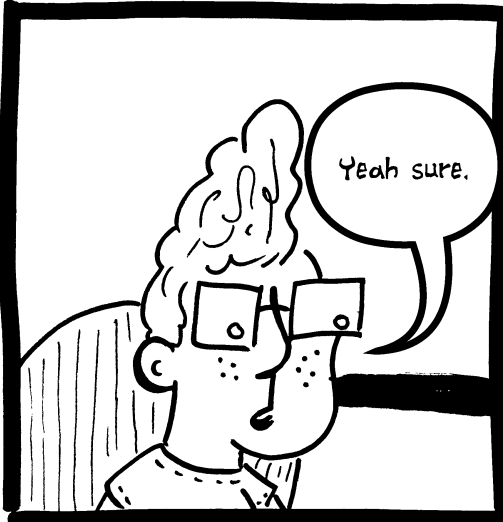




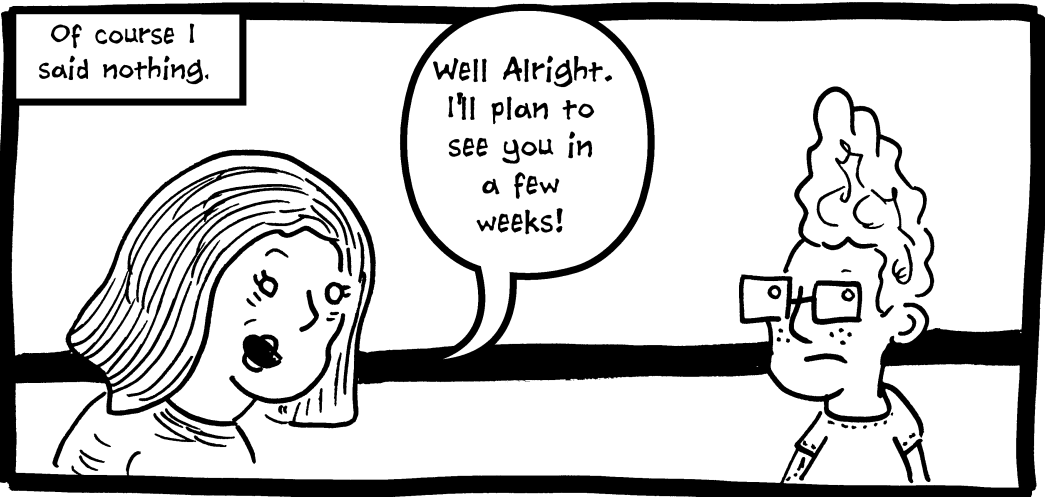
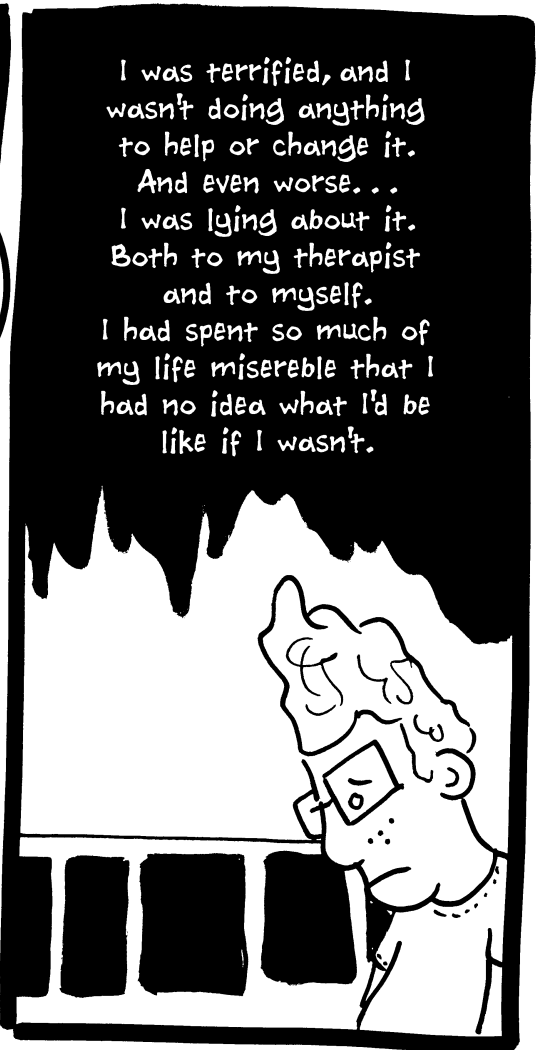


That's good!
It seems like
the Prozac
is helping.

I was terrified, and I
wasn't doing anything
to help or change it.
And even worse...
I was lying about it.
Both to my therapist
and to myself.
I had spent so much of
my life miserable that I
had no idea what I'd be
like if I wasn't.



Yeah sure.



Of course I
said nothing.

Well Alright.
I'll plan to
see you in
a few
weeks!

MINOR THREAT



Minor Threat started **STRAIGHT EDGE** hardcore. A movement that emphasized not using drugs, alcohol, and refraining from promiscuous sex.

Their career is groundbreaking both musically and culturally.

They weren't afraid to be different. When the world pushed them they pushed back. They showed me that punk was full of emotion. Often that emotion is anger, but they show it with such sincerity.

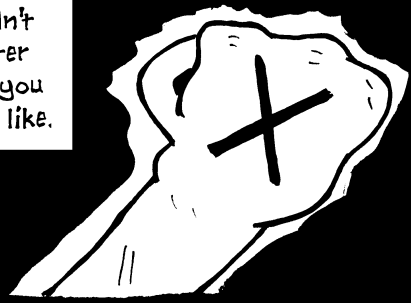
Stress and anger are a big part of hardcore and punk. Minor Threat gave us a healthy dose of both.



I remember first hearing about straight edge and being fascinated with the idea that kids saw something they weren't into and created a community for others who thought the same way.



It didn't matter what you looked like.



Minor Threat helped me solidify my feelings, that it was okay to have different ideals than other punks.

A month later.

So I'm seeing a new therapist and nurse now.

That's good. They got you on pills?

Yeah, it's funny though. I quit drinking to become straight edge and now I take a bunch of meds to feel okay.

You couldn't be straight edge anyway. You take insulin. That's a drug!

Fucking poser.

HA HA HA
HA HA HA

There used to be so much going on. Shows and practices. Do you ever miss it?

I miss playing for 10 people?

HA HA HA

I feel like after the band ended I started having these problems. Do you think the two are related?

Not really.

Sometimes I feel like I don't know who I am.



At therapy.

KAREN

Alright. Tell me. How has this week been?

It's been fine. Tired but fine.

Don't you lie to me!

You look like SHIT.

Uh... Thanks? I guess things have been rough.

CLICK TAP



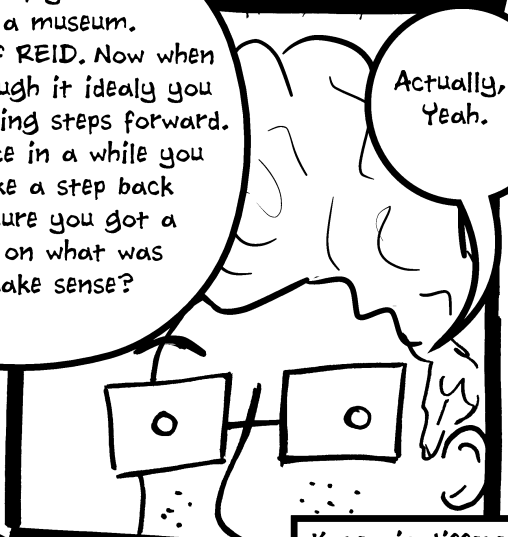
You see? Was that so bad? Well tell me about it?



I don't really know where to start. It's like every time I move forward I take a step back.



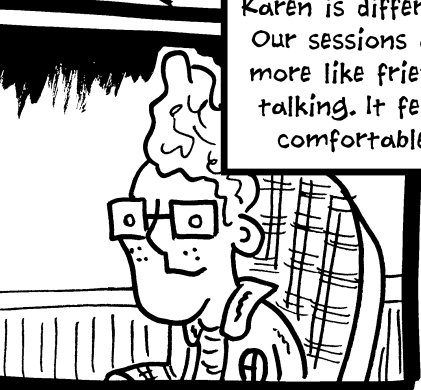
Think of your life like a museum. The Museum of REID. Now when you walk through it ideally you want to be taking steps forward. But every once in a while you have to take a step back and make sure you got a good look on what was there. Make sense?



Actually, Yeah.

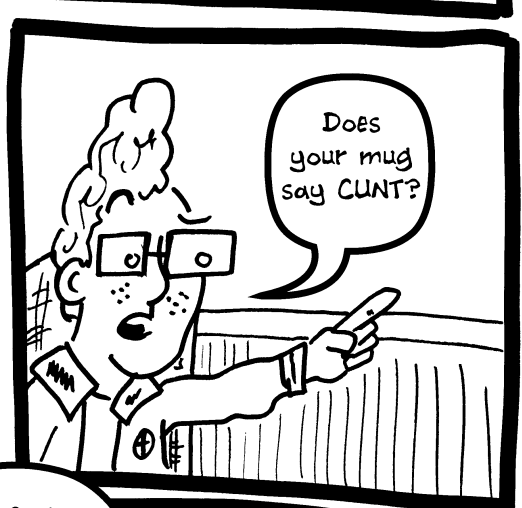


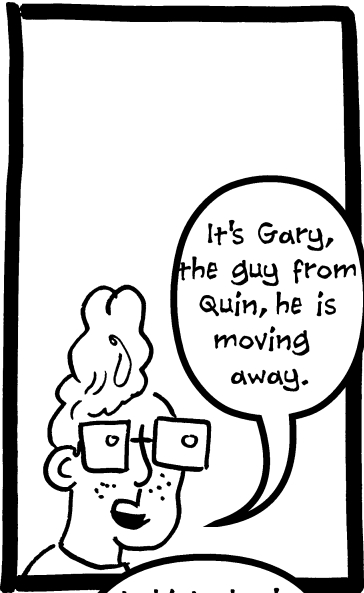
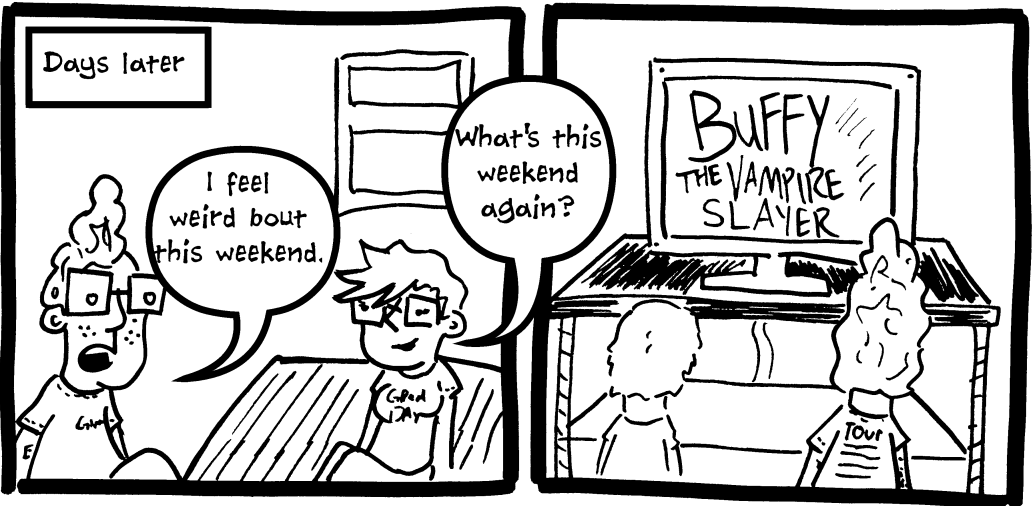
Oh thank God! I was beginning to worry. Man, lemme tell you I played with my kids this week and it fucked my back up!

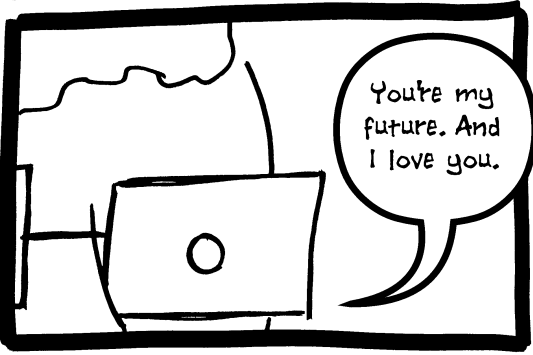


Karen is different. Our sessions are more like friends talking. It feels comfortable.









HUSKER DU



Greg Norton, Grant Hart, and Bob Mould started HUSKER DU in 1979.

The band started as a hardcore band until they made their way into alternative rock.



The band even had early releases on SST (Greg Ginn of Black Flag's record label).

They created the album ZEN ARCADE, a concept double album all about mental health. This was a big difference from other hardcore records, especially for SST. Rolling Stone called it "the closest hardcore will ever get to an opera."

As the band got bigger so did the problems. The band's long time manager killed himself before their next tour and that caused more tension between members.

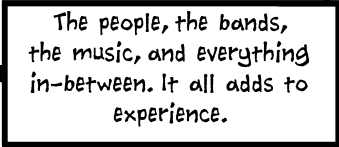
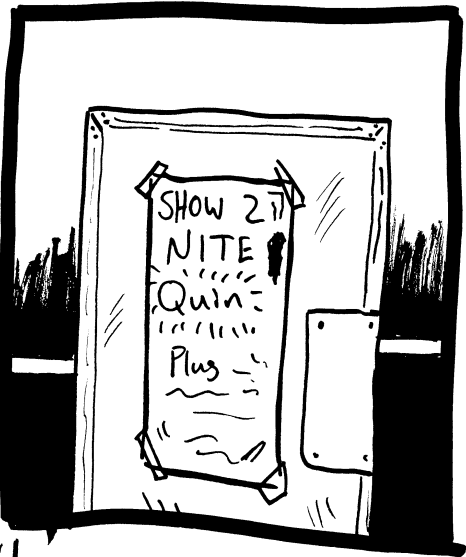
Bob and Grant stopped writing songs together and began competing with each other in their writing.



Each member decided to go it's separate ways.

They were reaching the end of their collective ropes.

On their last tour they decided to call it quits when Grant's bottle of methadone leaked and they were unsure if he could make it through the tour without methadone or heroine. They just figured it best to end it.

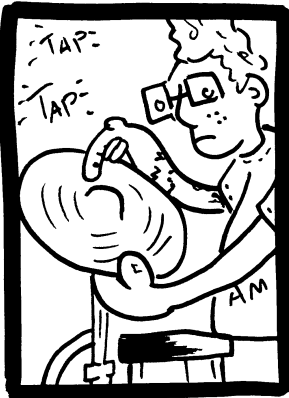
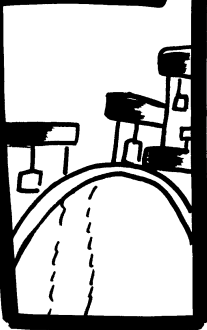
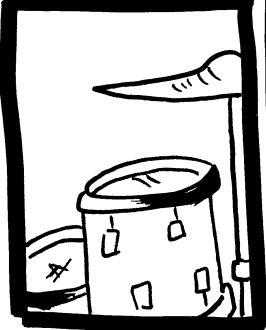
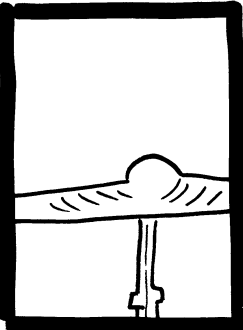
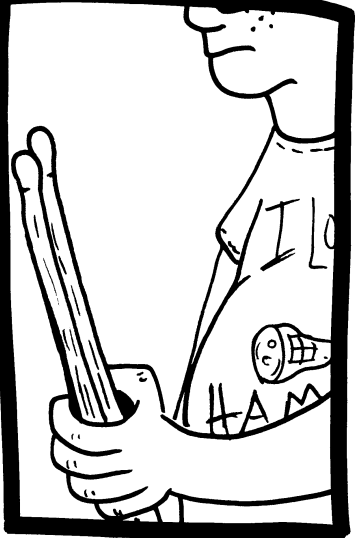


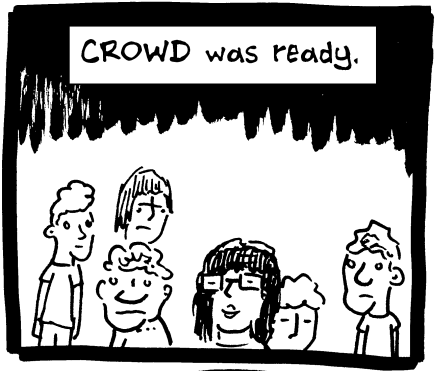
Although, after a while I started to keep to myself at these shows.



I remember this show probably better than any other show.

I went outside to unload the drums and get ready to play our set.



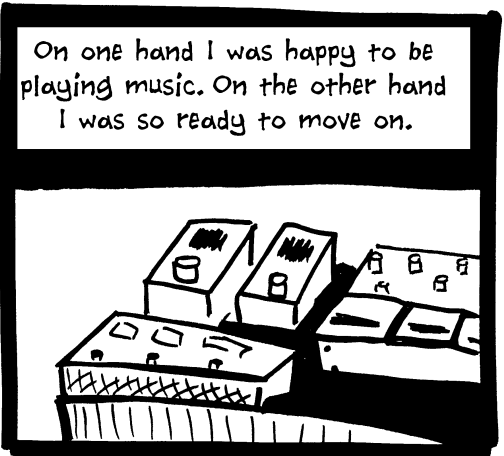
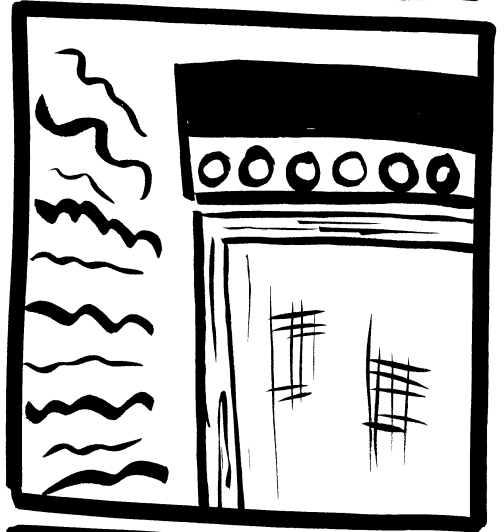


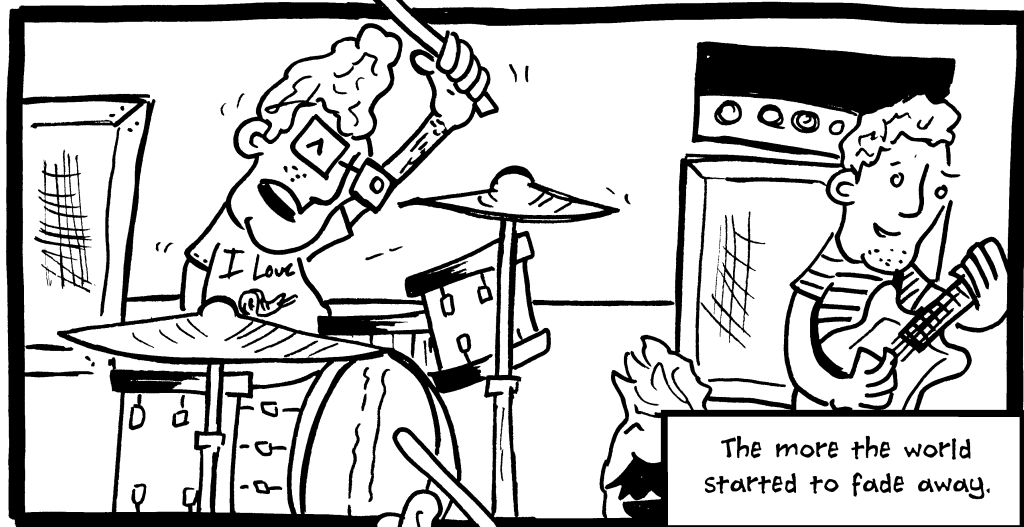
WHEE O O D E E E E E

E E E E E E E E E

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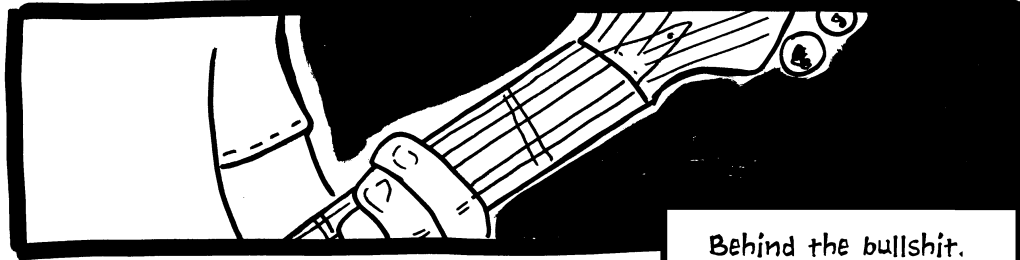
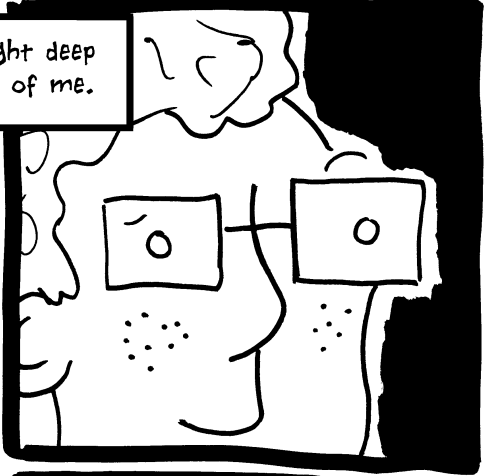




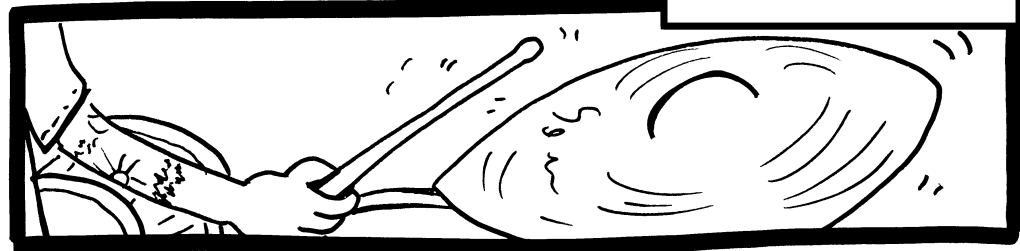




I felt the light deep
down inside of me.

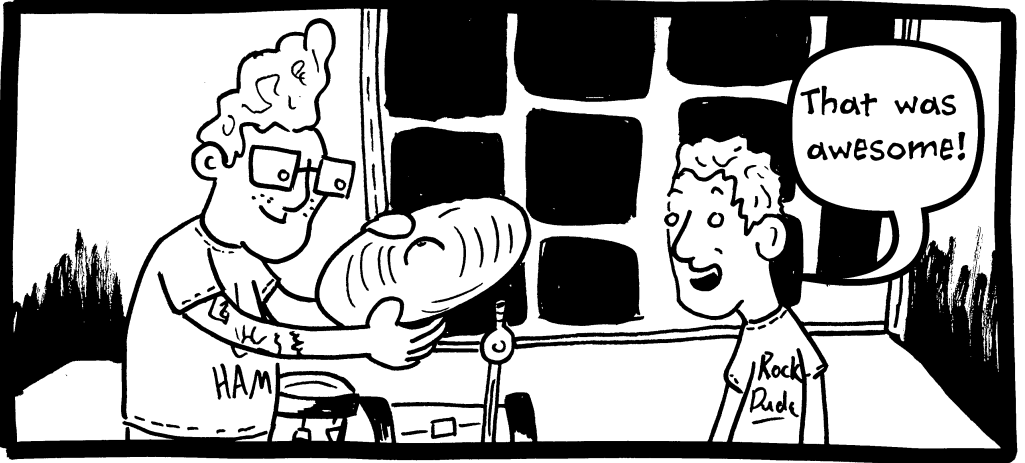


Behind the bullshit.



Behind the breakdowns,
the pill bottles, the
temptation, the sadness,

**THERE IS STILL
A LIGHT.**



KEENY
IS A ~~MAN~~
SLUT ♡

TRUMP IS
A RASISIT
(RACIST) ↗



I still love to read
the writing on the wall

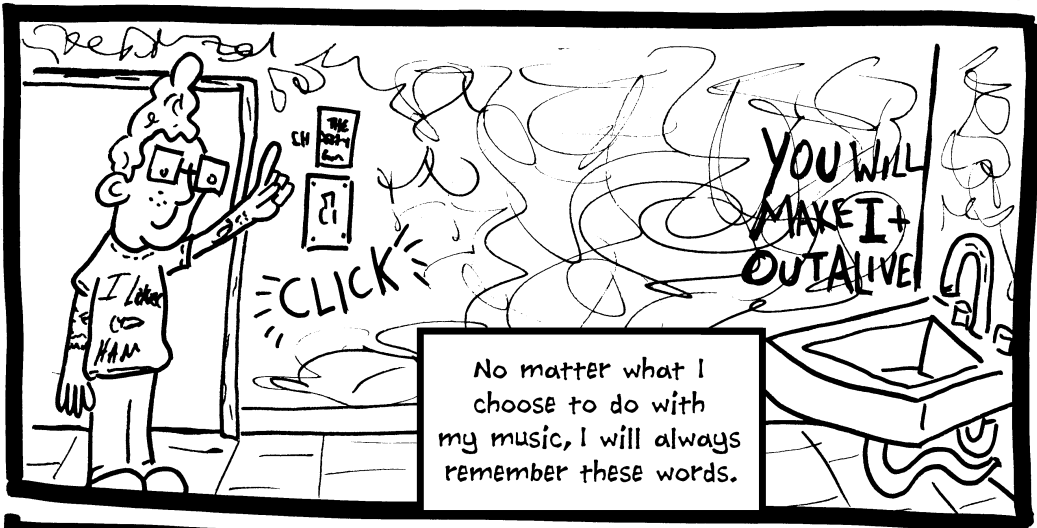
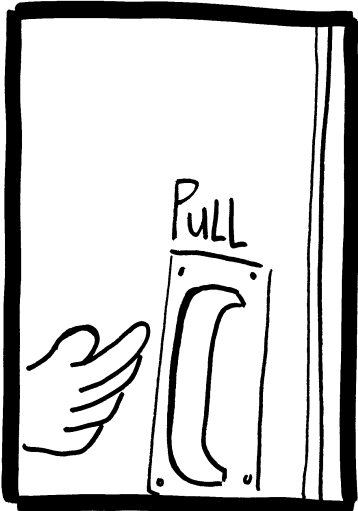


YOU WILL
MAKE

OUT

YOU WILL
MAKE IT
OUT ALIVE.



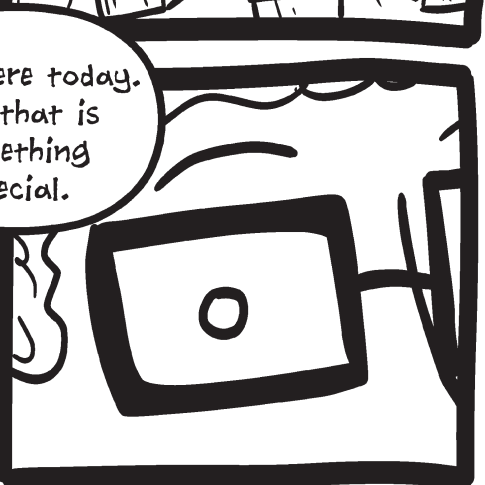


No matter what I choose to do with my music, I will always remember these words.

YOU WILL
MAKE I +
OUTALIVE

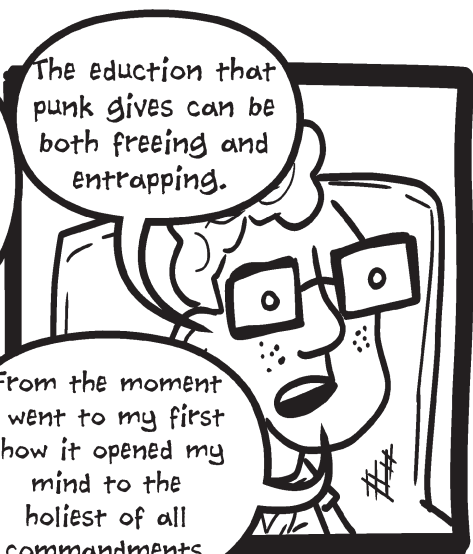
[FIN]

Epilogue





The music and culture of punk rock has helped make me who I am. But...



The education that punk gives can be both freeing and entrapping.

From the moment I went to my first show it opened my mind to the holiest of all commandments.



Do.
It.
Yourself.

I embraced this ethos with all of my heart. Yet the one thing that my experience in punk didn't set me up to do is to **SEEK HELP**. I wanted to do this on my own, and in the end I couldn't. I always said I wanted to be a part of something bigger. And I am.



I made it out alive because two things happened in my life.. Punk opened the door to mental health awareness, but I had to make the choice to walk through that door.

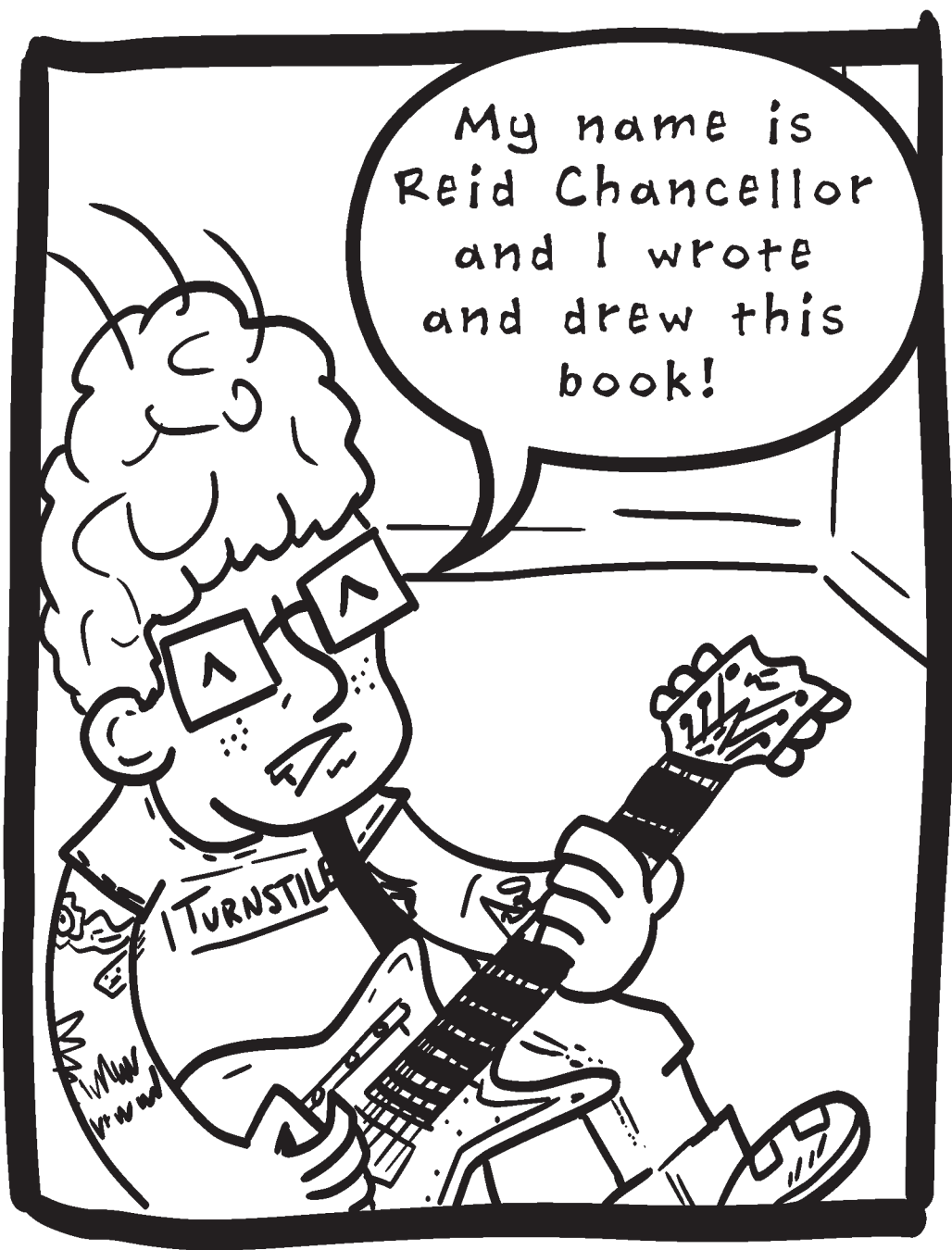
I love that punk opens doors to great things. And it is my dream to see punk push people to walk through those doors and get help for their issues.



We are.

About the Author

My name is
Reid Chancellor
and I wrote
and drew this
book!



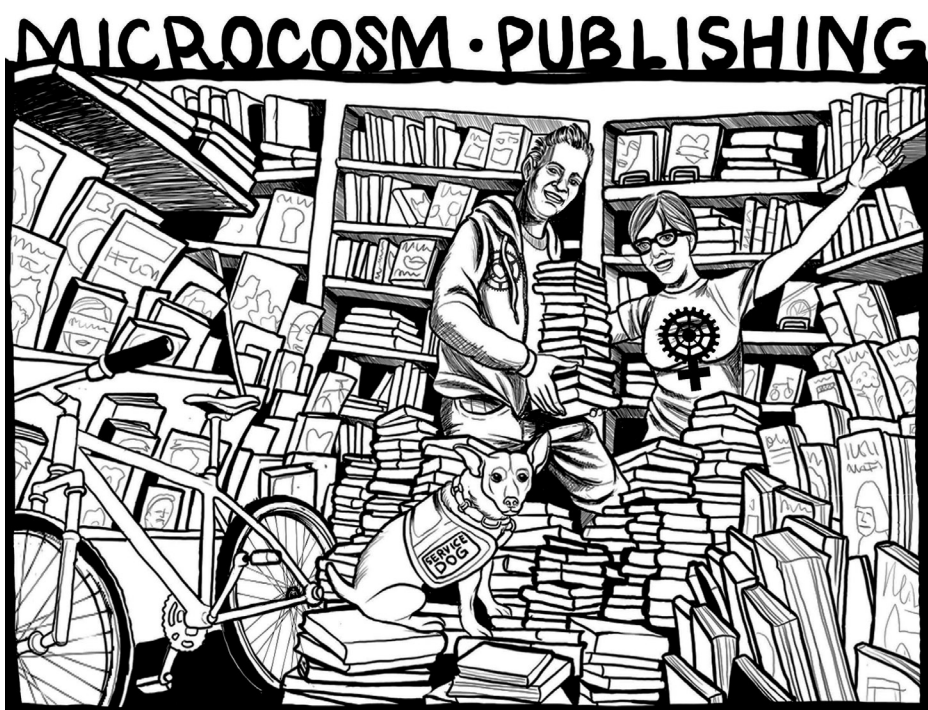
I am an
artist and
musician
from
Indiana.

This book is
super personal
and I am
truly proud
of it.



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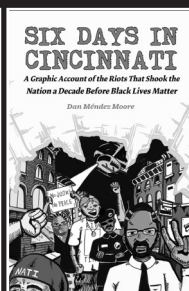
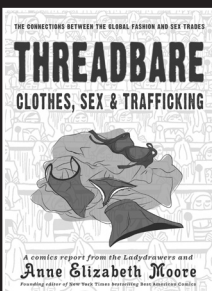
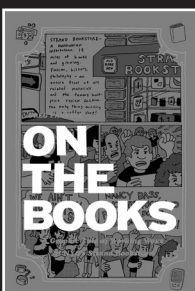
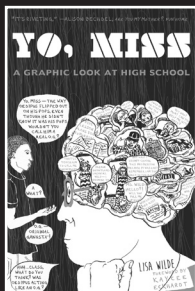


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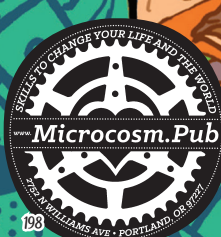
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Punk rock and mental health have been intertwined since the very beginning. Nervous breakdowns, anxiety, seeking acceptance, attempting to overcome internalized demons, and reacting to harmful and oppressive systems—punk rock embodies and emboldens all our feelings and experiences, positive and negative. *Hardcore Anxiety* charts and tracks punk movements from the 70s till today, from small towns to stadiums, from the struggles in our heads to the people actively harming us in our communities. Told from the point of view of a young man discovering punk and working through mental illness in Evansville, Indiana, this stunning nonfiction graphic novel gives punks the most important advice of all: "You aren't alone. You're going to make it through alive."



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